



The Right Reverend
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T E N
S E R M O N S

Preached on
Several Occasions.

By the Right Reverend Father in
God EDWARD Lord
Bishop of Worcester.

The Second VOLUME.

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SERMON I.

THE
Reformation Justify'd:

Preached at
GUILD-HALL CHAPEL

Septemb. 21. 1673.

ACTS XXIV. 14.

*But this I confess unto thee, that after
the way which they call heresie, so
worship I the God of my Fathers, be-
lieving all things which are written
in the Law and the Prophets.*

IN the Beginning of this Chapter we
find St. Paul brought to his Tryal
before Felix the Roman Governour,
wherein (if we only except the unfit-
ness of the Judge) all other things con-
B ~~~~~ curred,

Sermon First.

curred, which could make such an action considerable, *viz.* the greatness of the *cause*, the quality of the *persons*, and the *skill* which was shewed in the management of it. The cause was not common and ordinary, such as were wont to be tryed before the *Governours of Provinces*, but of an unusual and publick nature; not a *question of words and names*, as *Gallio* thought it, but a matter of the highest importance to the World: which being managed by *St. Paul*, with that zeal and industry, which was agreeable to it, gave occasion to his malicious Countreymen to accuse him before the *Roman Governour*, as one guilty of Faction and Sedition. Under this colour, they hoped easily to gain the *Governour's* good will to their design; being a person that more regarded the quiet of his *Province*, than all the concernments of Truth and Religion. But that this design might be carried on with the greater pomp and shew of Justice and Piety, they do not commit the care of it to the rage of the People, or some furious Zealots; but the *High Priest* and some members of the *Sanhedrin* go down on purpose from *Hierusalem* to *Cæsarea*, and carry with them

them one of their most eloquent *Advocates* called *Tertullus* to manage the Accusation against *Paul*. Who was no sooner called forth, but the Orator begins to shew his art, by a flattering insinuation, which is most apt to prevail with men of mean and corrupt minds; *Seeing that by thee, saith he, we enjoy* Ver. 2, 3. *great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this Nation by thy providence; we accept it always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness:* Having thus prepared his Judge, he presently falls upon the matter, and charges *St. Paul* with being a Ver. 5, 6. pestilent and seditious person, a disturber of his Nation in all parts, a profaner of the Temple; but the main point of all, and in which the rest were comprehended, was, that *he was a ring-leader of the Sect of the Nazarenes.* (So the Christians were then called among the Jews, from our Saviour's abode in the Town of *Nazareth*.) But although the Writer of this History gives us only the short heads of his accusation; yet we may easily suppose by *St. Paul's* answer, that he insisted more largely on this, than on any of the rest: representing to *Felix*, "That when the Jewish

" Church had been at first established
 " by God himself under Laws of his
 " own making, when he had so settled
 " the several orders and degrees of men
 Mal. 2. 7. " among them, that *the Priests lips were*
 " *to preserve knowledge, and the Law to*
 " *be sought at their mouths*; when un-
 " der this Government, their Religion
 " had been preserved for many hundreds
 " of years, and after many Revolutions
 " they enjoyed one common and pub-
 " lick Worship among them, though
 " there were several distinct Orders of
 " Religious men (such as the *Phar-*
 " *isees and Essenes*) yet all agreed in the
 " same Divine Worship; but now at
 " last, to their great regret and horror,
 " appears one *Jesus of Nazareth*, a per-
 " son of obscure Parentage and mean
 " Education, who pretended to disco-
 " ver many corruptions in the Doctrine
 " and Practices of our best men; and
 " without any Authority from the High
 " Priest or *Sanhedrin* he gathered Disci-
 " ples, and drew multitudes of people
 " after him; till at last the wisdom of
 " our Governours thought it fit to take
 " him off, and make him an example
 " for *Reformers*; notwithstanding this,
 " his bold and forward Disciples after
 " his

"his death carried on the same design,
 "pretending that *the time of Reformati-* Heb. 9 10.
 "*on was come*; and accordingly have
 "formed themselves into a Sect, vigo-
 "rous and active, of high pretences,
 "and dangerous designs, which if it
 "continues and increales, can end in no-
 "thing short of the ruine of our *ancient*
 "*Jewish Catholick Church*: which hath
 "had so constant and visible a Successi-
 "on in all Ages; that hath had so ma-
 "ny Martyrs and Confessors in it; so
 "many Devout and Religious Persons
 "as the *Pharisees* are; so excellent an
 "Order and Government, so much u-
 "nity and peace before this new Sect of
 "*Nazarenes* arose in opposition to that
 "Authority with which God had in-
 "vested the High Priest and Rulers of
 "the People. And among all the pro-
 "moters of this *new Sect*, there is none
 "more factious and busie than this *Paul*
 "whom we here accuse; and whom
 "*some of our Nation found in the Temple*
 "*prophaning of it*, and there we would
 "presently, out of meer zeal to our Re-
 "ligion, have taken and destroyed;
 "but he was violently rescued out of
 "our hands, and sent hither to be tryed;
 "and these things, which I have spoken,

“ is the sense of all those who are come
 “ down as witnesses; for so we read,
*v. 9. And the Jews also assented, and
 said, that these things were so.* St. Paul
 being thus accused, and having leave
 given him to answer for himself, was so
 far from being daunted by the greatness
 of his enemies, or the vehemency of
 their accusation, that he tells the Go-
 vernour, that he did *with all cheerfulness*
 undertake his defence: and there
 being two parts of his accusation, 1. His
 tumultuous and profane carriage in the
 Temple; this he utterly denies, *v. 11,*
12, 13. and plainly tells them, they
 can never prove it against him. 2. But
 as to the other and main part of the
 Charge, his being a *ringleader of the
 Sect of the Nazarenes*; although he
 would not, out of his great modesty,
 take upon himself to be one of the
 Heads or Chiefs among them, yet as to
 the owning of that way, notwithstanding
 all the imputations they had cast upon
 it, he doth it with the greatest freedom
 and courage in the presence of his Judge
 and Accusers; and not only so, but de-
 fends himself therein, that he had done
 nothing contrary to the Laws of God,
 or the most ancient Religion of his
 Country:

Countrey: all which particulars are contained in the words of the Text; *But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresie, so worship I the God of my Fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets.*

Wherein we have these three things considerable.

1. The Imputation which Christianity suffered under in its first appearance: *After the way, which they call heresie.*

2. The Way taken by St. Paul to remove this false Imputation; viz. by appeal to Scripture and Antiquity; *So worship I the God of my Fathers, believing all things that are written in the Law and the Prophets.*

3. The Courage of St. Paul in so freely owning his Religion in the presence of his greatest enemies, and when they were in hopes to destroy him for it: *This I confess unto thee, that after the way, &c.*

1. I begin with the false Imputation which Christianity suffered under at its first appearance; *After the way, which is called heresie*; the same Word which is translated *Sect*, v. 5. and although the Word be indifferent in it self, yet where

it is taken for a combination of men together against an established Religion and lawful Authority (as it was by the Jews when they charged the Christians under this name) then it implies in it a twofold accusation: 1. Of Novelty and Singularity. 2. Of Faction and Sedition.

1. Of Novelty. A Sect or Heresie in this sence implies in it, mens setting up with a new Doctrine which was not heard of before; and making that the Foundation of a new Society separate and distinct from the established Church, and consequently they must charge the Church they are divided from with errors and corruptions, or they make themselves guilty of Schism, *i. e.* unnecessary separation. Now upon these two grounds the Jews laid the imputation of a *New Sect* upon the *Nazarenes* or *Christians*, 1. Because they could not shew a visible succession in all Ages: 2. Because they could not prove the Jewish Church to be guilty of such errors and corruptions as to need a Reformation.

1. They could not shew a Succession in all Ages of such persons who agreed in all things with them. "For
" where

"where (say they) were the men to
 "be found in former Ages, that taxed
 "the Jewish Church with such errors
 "and corruptions as *Jesus of Nazareth*
 "did? that bid men *beware of the leaven*
 "*of the Scribes and Pharisees, i. e. of the*
 "most learned and holy men? Had not
 "God always a Visible Church among
 "them? they could produce the names
 "of their High Priests in every Age,
 "and shew them all the marks of a Vi-
 "sible Church? For *in Judah was* Psal. 76. 1.
 "*God known, and his Name was great* Deut. 12. 11.
 "*in Israel. Hath not God said, that in* 2 Kings
 "*his House at Hierusalem he would put* 21. 7.
 "*his Name for ever; and his eyes and his* 2 Chron.
 "*heart should be there perpetually?* 7. 16. How
 "is it then possible but there must be a
 "constant and visible Succession in all
 "Ages? since God would always have
 "a people to dwell among; and that
 "might be known to be his people by
 "the outward marks and signs of a true
 "Church. But if the Christians pre-
 "tences held good, God must for seve-
 "ral Ages have wanted a Church a-
 "mongst them. For none of those
 "things which they charged the Jews
 "with, were newly crept in among
 "them, but had been delivered down
 "to

“ to them by the Tradition of their
 “ Fore-fathers, in an uninterrupted man-
 “ ner, as they thought, from the very
 “ time of *Moses*. This was their Rule
 “ whereby they guided themselves in
 “ their actions of Religion, and in the
 “ sense of obscure places of the Law
 “ and the Prophets; and in that time
 “ after the cessation of Prophecy, when
 “ the Christians supposed these cor-
 “ ruptions to have come in among
 “ them, they could draw down a con-
 “ stant Succession from *the men of the*
 “ *great Synagogue*, of persons eminent
 “ for Learning and Piety that never
 “ charged them with any such corrupti-
 “ ons as *Jesus of Nazareth* and his Di-
 “ sciples did. Would God ever suffer
 “ such dangerous errors, hypocrisie,
 “ and superstitions to prevail in his own
 “ Church, and raise up no Persons to
 “ discover these things, till these new
 “ Teachers and Reformers arose? Were
 “ not *Hillel* and *Shammai* that so accu-
 “ rately discussed all the niceties of the
 “ Law, able to find out such gross and
 “ open corruptions, if any such had
 “ been among us? Might not we say,
 “ that not only the Teachers, but God him-
 “ self had slept all that time, if he raised
 “ up

V. Bell. de
 not. Ecclef.
 l. 4. c. 5.
 §. prateren.

" up no one Person to discover the
 " coming in of such errors and corrupti-
 " ons ? Where had God then any true
 " Church in the world, if not among
 " his people of the Jews ? And would
 " he suffer that to be overspread with
 " such a Leprosie, and send none of his
 " Priests to discover it ? And even by
 " the confession of the Christians them-
 " selves, they were once the beloved
 " and chosen people of God, how or
 " when was it that they ceased to be so ?
 " Do not themselves acknowledge, that
 " they receive the Law and the Prophets
 " from our hands ? And that *to us were* Rom. 3. 2.
 " *committed the Oracles of God, and to*
 " *us pertained the adoption, and the glo-* 9. 4. 5.
 " *ry, and the Covenants, and the giving*
 " *of the Law, and the service of God and*
 " *the promises, and that ours are the*
 " *Fathers ?* How is it then possible af-
 " ter all these privileges, to suppose
 " this Church to fall into such a degene-
 " racy, as at last to be cast off by God,
 " and a new Church to arise out of the
 " ashes of it ? Thus we may reasonably
 " suppose the Jews to have argued for
 " themselves ; and on the other side, they
 " trampled upon and despised this new
 " Sect of the *Nazarenes*, " That had no-
 " thing

“ thing of the Pomp and Splendour of
 “ their Church: they had only a com-
 “ pany of mean and illiterate persons at
 “ first to joyn with them; the Disci-
 “ ples of their Master were a sort of
 “ poor Fishermen and inconsiderable per-
 “ sons, men of no Authority, or repu-
 “ tation for extraordinary Sanctity or
 “ Learning: even their Master himself
 “ was one of no great severity of life,
 “ that did not retire from the world,
 “ and lead an abstracted life, but con-
 “ versed with Publicans and Sinners,
 “ and put not his Disciples upon Fasting
 “ and long Prayers; whereas the Pha-
 “ risees were men of great austerity and
 “ mortification, much exercised in de-
 “ votion, making frequent and long
 “ prayers, at certain hours; and in
 “ whatever place those hours took them.
 “ Now how is it possible to believe,
 “ that such devout persons as these are
 “ mistaken, and the Sect of the *Naza-*
 “ *renes* only in the right? But besides
 “ all this, Where was their Church be-
 “ fore *Jesus of Nazareth*? We offer to
 “ produce a personal succession on our
 “ side, that joyned in constant commu-
 “ nion with us at the Temple at *Hie-*
 “ *rusalem*; let the Christians shew any
 “ number

“ number of men before themselves,
 “ that joyned with them in believing
 “ what they do, and rejecting the abu-
 “ ses which they tax among us. If they
 “ cannot do this, let them then suffer
 “ under the just imputation of Novel-
 “ ty.

2. “ But supposing they do not
 “ think it necessary to assign a number
 “ of men distinct from our Society, but
 “ say *it is enough that though they joyned*
 “ *with them in the worship of God, yet*
 “ *they did not in their corruptions:* yet
 “ to vindicate themselves, they must
 “ shew how it was possible for such cor-
 “ ruptions to come in, and no more
 “ notice be taken of them: Such
 “ things could not be introduced with-
 “ out some notable alteration; and in
 “ such a one, the author, the time, the
 “ place, the manner may be assigned:
 “ We can tell, say they, a’l these cir-
 “ cumstances in the Idolatries of *Jero-*
 “ *boam, Ahab, and Manasseh*; if so great
 “ alterations have happened in the state
 “ of our Church, that there is a neces-
 “ sity of reforming it; name us the per-
 “ sons, the time, the place, the man-
 “ ner how all these corruptions came
 “ in. When came men first to forsake
 “ the

" the letter of the *Scripture*, and adhere
 " to *Tradition*? Who first brought in
 " the *Pharisaical* Superstitions? What
 " was his name, where was his a-
 " bode, who first opposed and con-
 " demned him? Were all men asleep
 " then to suffer such alterations, and to
 " say nothing at all against them?
 " What, could one Generation conspire
 " to deceive the next? and if not, how
 " could such changes happen in matters
 " of Religion, and no one take care to
 " discover it and prevent the infecting
 " of posterity by it? Had no persons a-
 " ny regard to God and the purity of
 " Religion then? If they had, would
 " they suffer strange fire to come upon
 " God's Altar, and take no notice at all
 " of it? Why did not *Jesus of Nazareth*,
 " when he so frequently and vehement-
 " ly declaimed against the *Pharisaical*
 " hypocrisie and superstitions, and false
 " Doctrines, shew to the people, when,
 " and where, and how these things
 " came into the Church of God? He on-
 " ly condemns them, and speaks sharp-
 " ly against them, but he saith not one
 " word to satisfy the *Scientifical* men
 " among them, how it was possible for
 " corruptions to come in, and prevail
 " to

“ to such a degree, and yet no circumstances of time or place be assignable of it. Thus the Jews still believed themselves to be the only *true, ancient, visible, Catholick and infallible Church of God*, and despised the poor *Christians*, as a novel and upstart *Sect of Nazarenes*; which is the first imputation the *Christians* suffered under.

2. They suffered under the imputation of *Faction and Sedition*; which is the second thing implied in the name of *Sect* or *Hereſie* here mentioned; and that they charged upon them two ways.

1. For not submitting to the Churches Authority. 2. For disturbing the peace and quiet of the People.

1. For *not submitting to the Churches Authority*: not, that the Disciples of our Lord did out of humour, or fancy, or only to make a party, break with the Jews in matters meerly of order and indifferency: no, on the contrary we find them extreamly cautious of giving any offence in such matters, which temper they learnt of their *Lord and Master*, who complied with many things, that others might not take advantage by his omission of them, to slight and contemn them; thus when others were baptized Mat. 3. 16.

of

of *John*, he would be so too; not, that he had any need of washing away of sin: but he would not make use of a particular privilege to bring any discountenance upon a general duty. Thus we see, he went up at the solemn Feasts to *Hierusalem* as others did; and not only was present in the Temple, but vindicated by a Miracle the order and decency of it, by driving out the buyers and sellers from the outward parts of it, although they had a fair pretence of being ready at hand to serve the necessities of such as were to sacrifice to God in the Temple; nay, *St. Mark* tells us, that he would not suffer any vessel to be carried through the Temple: and this he did not upon any reason peculiar to the *Levitical Law*, but because it was a *House of Prayer*. And this example his Apostles followed, who after they had the *Holy Ghost* poured upon them, yet they attended the Temple at the hours of prayer. But most remarkable to this purpose, is the instance of *St. Paul* at that very time when he was seized upon, and like to be destroyed by the fury of the Jews. For understanding at *Hierusalem* from *St. James*, that there were many thousands of believing Jews that

Mat. 21. 12.

Mar. 11.
16.

Acts 3. 1.

Acts 21.
20/21.

that were still zealous of the Law, and were informed that St. Paul among the Gentiles slighted Circumcision and the Levitical Customs; he, to give them all reasonable satisfaction that he intended to make no unnecessary breach among them about indifferent matters, submits himself to a legal purification in the Temple for seven days together; Ver. 7. before the end of which, the Jews made a tumult and seized upon him, and so he was brought to answer the accusations against him in this Chapter. Thus carefull St. Paul was to give no ground for suspicion that he delighted in disorders and separations; this example he did leave to all prudent Christians, rather to submit to things which they have no great value for (as no doubt at this time St. Paul had very little for the Levitical Customs) than to hazard the breaking the peace of the Church for such matters. But notwithstanding all this care of the first Christians, they could not avoid the imputation of Faction; because they would not entirely submit their judgments to the Authority of the Jewish Church. For this was the great pretence they stood upon, that they were the Governours of the Church

C

by

Deut. 17.
8, 9, 10, 11,
12.

by God's own institution, that they were to explain and interpret the Law and the Prophets; and this was expressed in the beginning of their Law, *That in all cases of difficulty they were to go up to the place which the Lord their God should chuse; and to go to the Priests, and the Levites, and to the Judge, and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment. And thou shalt do according to the sentence which they of that place (which the Lord shall chuse) shall shew thee, and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee; and the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken to the Priest, (that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God) or unto the Judge, even that man shall die, and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel.* Upon this place, they might certainly much better establish the infallibility of their own Church, than others draw an argument for Infallibility in the Christian Church from it. However, absolute obedience would serve their turn, to charge the Christians with *Faction*, in not submitting to their Authority. "For, was not this a matter of difficulty, whether the Messias were to be a temporal Prince or not? concerning what

“ what time, and place, and person the
 “ Prophecies were to be understood ?
 “ Who were the competent Judges in
 “ this case, but those whom God had
 “ established by his Law ? If the Scribes
 “ and Pharisees were charged with false
 “ glosses, and corrupting the Law by
 “ their Traditions, the Christians were
 “ not to take upon themselves to judge
 “ of them ; but to appeal to the High
 “ Priest and the *Sanhedrin*, who were
 “ the only lawfull Judges in these mat-
 “ ters : Their duty was submission and
 “ patience ; but by no means ought they
 “ upon their own Authority to begin a
 “ new Church, and to broach new Do-
 “ctrines directly contrary to the judg-
 “ment of the High Priest and *Sanhedrin* ;
 “ yea, after they had pronounced Sen-
 “ tence against *Jesus* of *Nazareth*, and
 “ condemned him to death ; and ex-
 “ communicated his followers, and pu-
 “ nished as many as they could get in-
 “ to their power ; what could it (in their
 “ opinion) be but the Spirit of Faction
 “ and Disobedience thus to oppose the
 “ Authority of their Church, in be-
 “ lieving contrary to its decrees, and
 “ reforming without any power deri-
 “ ved from it ? We see in our Saviour’s

time how severely they check'd any of the people who spake favourably of Christ and his Doctrine ; as though the poor ignorant people were fit to judge of these matters ! to understand Prophecies, and to know the true Messias, when he should appear ! And therefore when some of their Officers that had been sent to apprehend him, came back with admiration of him, and said, *Never man spake like this man* ; they take them up short and tell them, *They must believe as the Church believes* ; what, they take upon them to judge of such matters ! No, they must submit to their Governours . *Have any of the Rulers, or Pharisees believed on him ? but this people which know not the Law are cursed.* i.e. When they set up their own judgment in opposition to the Authority of the Church. And after our Saviour's death at a solemn Council at *Hierusalem*, when *Peter* and *John* were summoned before them ; the first Question they ask'd was, *By what power, or by what name have ye done this ?* They never enquired, whether the Miracle were wrought or no, or whether their Doctrine were true ; all their Question was about their Mission, whether it were ordi-

Joh. 7. 46,
47, 48, 49.

Acts 4. 7.

ordinary or extraordinary; or what authority they could pretend to, that were not sent by themselves; but let the things be never so true, which they said, if they could find any flaw in their Mission according to their own Rules and Laws, this they thought sufficient ground to forbid them to preach any more, and to charge them with Faction if they disobeyed.

2. They charged the Christians with *Faction* in being *so active and busie* to promote Christianity to the great disturbance of the Jews in all parts. This *Tertullus* accused St. Paul of, *that he was* Ver. 5. *a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world; and accordingly the Jews at Thessalonica take the Christians by force and carry them to the Rulers of the City, crying, Those that* Acts 17.6. *have turned the world upside down are come hither also.* This they knew was the most effectual course to render them odious to all Governours, who are apt to suspect all new things as dangerous, and think no truth can compensate the hazard of alterations. Thus it was especially among the *Roman* Governours, who had learnt from the counsel given to *Augustus*, to be particularly jealous

of all innovations in Religion ; and had much rather the people should continue quiet under an old error, than have the peace disturbed for the greatest Truth. This was really the greatest difficulty in the way of Christianity ; it came no where, but people were possessed beforehand with quite other apprehensions of Religion, than the Christians brought among them. The Jewish and Pagan Religions were in possession in all places, and the people were at ease in the practice of them. What then must the Christians *do* ? Must they let them alone and not endeavour to convince them of the truth of their own Doctrine ? If so, they are unfaithfull to their trust, betrayers of truth, and false to the Souls of men : if they go about to perswade men out of their Religion, they know, such is the fondness most men have for their own opinions, especially in Religion, that where they might hope to convince *one*, they might be sure to enrage *many* ; especially of those whose interest lay in upholding the old Religion. How little doth Reason signifie with most men, where Interest is against it ! Truth and Falshood are odd kind of Metaphysical things to them, which they do
not

not care to trouble their heads with; but what makes for or against their Interest, is thought easie and substantial. All other matters are, as *Gallio* said, *questions of names and words*, which they care not for; but no men will sooner offer to demonstrate a thing to be false, than they who know it to be against their interest to believe it to be true. This was the case of these great men of the Jews that came down to accuse *Paul*; they easily saw whither this new Religion tended, and if it prevailed among their people, farewell then to all the *Pomp* and *Splendor* of the *High-Priesthood* at *Hierusalem*; farewell then to the *Glory* of the *Temple* and *City* whither all the Tribes came up to worship thrice a year; farewell then to all the riches, and ease, and pleasure which they enjoyed: And what was the greatest Truth and best Religion in the World to them, in comparison with these? These were sufficient reasons to them to accuse Truth it self of deceiving men, and the most peaceable Doctrine of laying the Foundation of Faction and Sedition. Thus we have consider'd the false imputations which were cast upon Christianity at first, implied in these words, *After*

the way which is called Hereſe.

2. I now come to the way taken by St. Paul to remove theſe falſe imputations, which he doth,

1. By an appeal to Scripture, as the ground and rule of his faith, *Believing all things which are written in the law and the Prophets.*

2. By an appeal to the beſt and pureſt Antiquity, as to the object of Worſhip; *So worſhip I the God of my Fathers*, not bringing in any new Religion, but reſtoring it to its primitive purity.

1. By an appeal to Scripture as the ground and rule of his faith. The Jews pleaded *Poſſeſſion, Tradition, Authority* of the *preſent Church*: againſt all theſe, St. Paul fixes upon a certain and unmoveable Foundation, *the Law and the Prophets*. He doth not here inſiſt upon any particular revelation made to himſelf, but offers the whole matter in diſpute to be tryed by a common Rule that was allowed on both ſides. And his meaning is, if they could prove that he either aſſerted, or did any thing contrary to *the Law and the Prophets*, then they had ſome reaſon to accuſe him of innovation, or beginning of a *new Sect*; but if the Foundation of his doctrine
and

and practice lay in what themselves acknowledged to be from God, then they had no cause to charge him with introducing a *new Sect* among them.

But the great Question here is, "What ground *St. Paul* had to decline the Authority of the present Church? Since God himself had appointed the Priests to be the Interpreters of the Law; and therefore in doubtfull cases resort was to be made to them; and not the judgment left to particular persons about the sense of Scripture: And yet in this case it is apparent *St. Paul* declined all Authority of the present Church; for at that very time the *High-Priests and Elders* came down to accuse him, and he takes not the least notice of their judgment in this matter. I shall therefore now shew that *St. Paul* had very great reason so to do, and to appeal only to *Scripture*.

1. Because the Authority of the present Church was more liable to error and mistake, than the Rule of Scripture was.

2. Because it was liable to more partiality, than that was.

1. Because it was more liable to error and mistake, than the Rule of Scripture

pture was. It was agreed on both sides, that the Law was from God, and that *the Prophets spake by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost*; all that was now left was only to find out the true meaning of them, and to compare Prophecies with events. As in the case of the *Messias*, if the circumstances foretold by the *Prophets* had their exact accomplishment in Christ, as might appear to those who carefully compared them; *If he were born at Bethlehem, of the Tribe of Judah, when the Scepter was departed from it, and during the second Temple*, and all other circumstances agreeing; then though the ordinary judgment concerning *true Prophets* belonged to the *Sanhedrin*, yet it was far more reasonable to believe that they were mistaken, than that all the Prophecies should be accomplished in a person that was not the true *Messias*. For those Prophecies were not intended only for the *Priests* and *Rulers*, but for directions to the People, that they might be able to judge of the accomplishment of them: otherwise when the *Authority* of the *Jewish Church* condemned our *Saviour*, the People could have no reason to believe him to be the

the *Messias*; if they were bound in the *sense* of *Scripture* to submit their judgment wholly to the Churches Authority. It is plain then, that the sense of *Scripture* may be so evident to private capacities, that they are not to submit in it to the *present Authority of a Church*. For notwithstanding all the promises made to the *Jewish Church*, and the command of submitting to the sentence of their *Priests and Rulers*, in a matter of the highest concernment, *viz.* concerning the true *Messias*, men were bound to believe directly contrary to the *present Authority* in the Church. For the people were bound to believe *Christ* to be the *true Messias*; although the *High Priests and Elders* had condemned him for a *deceiver and malefactor*. But besides this particular case, there may be several others wherein men may lawfully reject *the authority of the present Church*; and those are, when that Authority shall go about to overthrow those things which must be supposed antecedent to the belief of any such Authority: as, 1. The common sense of mankind. 2. The force of a divine Law. 3. The liberty of judgment concerning truth and falsehood. All these

these must necessarily be supposed before any Authority of a Church; but if any Church goes about to overthrow these, it thereby forfeits its own Authority over men.

1. If it requires things contrary to common sense; as in that instance wherein some of the *Jewish Rabbies* required submission to their Authority, viz. in believing the right hand to be the left, or the left to be the right, if they determined so; or supposing the Jews to have required the people to deny that they ever saw any Miracle wrought by Christ; or in the Miracle of the Loaves, that what they saw and handled, and tasted, to be bread was true bread; or to say, that the same individual body might be in a thousand places at once, or that things whose nature it is to be in another, can subsist without their proper subject; what Church soever requires such things as these from its members to be believed, gives them just reason to reject its Authority.

2. If it requires things contrary to the force and reason of a divine Law: as the Jews themselves would have acknowledged, if any Authority among them

them had gone about either to have left out the second Commandment, or made it lawfull to give Religious worship to Images, under any distinctions whatsoever: or if the Priests had taken away from the people their share in the sacrifices, under pretence of the *unsanctified teeth*, or the *long beards* of the Laity, which were not fit to touch what had been offered in sacrifice to God. But we need not put cases among them, for our Saviour therefore bids men *have a* Matt. 15.6. 16.6. *care of the leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees*, because *by their traditions they made the Commandment of God of none effect*: as in their *Corban*, if they made a vow to God they thought themselves excused from relieving their Parents; and in this way our Saviour generally deals with them, shewing that though they pretended to keep the letter of the Law, yet by their corrupt additions and false glosses they overthrew the scope and design of it: which he thought sufficient reason to reject their Authority; and therefore when he bids his Disciples, *observe and do whatsoever the Scribes* Mat. 23.3. *and Pharisees bid them*; it must be supposed to be only while they keep to the letter and reason of the Law; for
if

if he had intended an absolute obedience, he would never elsewhere have
 Mat. 16. 12. bid his Disciples *beware of their Doctrine.*

3. If it takes away all liberty of judgment concerning truth and fallshood in Religion. For this is a natural right which every man hath to judge for himself: and they that take this away, may as well command all men to put out their eyes, that they may better follow their Guides. But the other is so much worse, because it is an assault upon our understandings, it is a robbing us of the greatest talent God hath committed to our management, it is a rape upon our best faculties, and prostituting them to the lusts of Spiritual Tyrants; it is not *captivating our understandings to the obedience of faith*, but enslaving them to the proud and domineering usurpations of men; wherein they would do by us as the *Philistines* did by *Sampson*; they would put out our eyes, that we might grind in their prison, and make them sport. I would not be mistaken, it is the liberty of judgment I plead for, and not of practice; that may be justly restrained by the Laws of the Church, where the other is allowed; because the obligations

ons to peace and unity are different from those to faith and inward assent. And that no absolute submission of judgment could be required by the Law of *Moses*, notwithstanding the command of outward obedience in the cases mention'd, *Deut.* 17. 8, 9, &c. is most evident from hence, because that Law makes provision for a *sin-offering in case* Lev. 4. 15. *the whole Congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the Assembly, or Supream Council, and they have done something against the commandment of the Lord:* which had been a Law made to no purpose, if it had been impossible for their chief Authority to have erred or been mistaken in their judgment. From hence we see *St. Paul* had great reason to appeal from the *Highb Priest and Elders to the Law and the Prophets*, because they were subject to error and mistake, but these are not.

2. Because *the Law and the Prophets* are less liable to *partiality*, than a living Judge, or the Authority of the present Church. I have oft-times wondered to hear men speak so advantageously of a *living Judge*, before an *infallible Rule*, in order to the end of Controversies. If all

all they mean be only that *an end be put to them* no matter *how*, I confess a *living Judge* in that case hath much the advantage, but so would any other way that persons would agree upon, as the judgment of the next person we met with, or Lottery, or any such thing; but if we would have things fairly examined and heard, and a judgment given according to the merits of the cause, the case will be found very different here from what it is in civil causes. For here the Judge must be a party concerned, when his own Authority and Interest is questioned; and liable to all those passions which men are subject to in their own cases. Which will be notoriously evident in the case before us, between the *High Priest and Elders* on one side, and *St. Paul* on the other: They pleaded, that if any difficulty arose about the sense of the Law, it belonged to them to judge of it; *St. Paul* declines their judgment, and appeals only to the *Law and the Prophets*: had it been reasonable in this case for *Felix* to have referred the judgment to them who were the parties so deeply concerned? A living Judge may have a great advantage over a bare Rule to put an end to controversies;

controversies; but then we must suppose impartiality in him, freedom from prejudice, an excellent judgment, diligence and patience in hearing all the evidence, and at last delivering sentence according to the sense of the Law; if any of these be wanting, the controversy may soon be ended, but on the wrong side. I suppose none of those who would have controversies in Religion ended by a living Judge, will for shame say, they would have them ended right or wrong; but if they would have Truth determined, they must give us assurance, that these Judges shall lay aside all partiality to their own interests, all prejudice against their Adversaries, shall diligently search, and examine, and weigh the evidence on both sides, and then shall determine according to the true sense of the Law. How likely this is, will appear by the living Judges in our Saviour's time; Was there ever greater partiality seen than was in them, or more obstinate prejudice, or more wilfull errors, or a more malicious sentence than came from them in the cause of our Lord and Saviour? They would not believe his Miracles, though told them by those that saw them; when they saw them, they

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would

would not believe they came from God, but attributed them to the Devil ; they would not so much as enquire the true place of his Nativity, but ran on still with that wilfull mistake, *that he was born in Galilee* ; and by this they thought to confound *Nicodemus* presently, Search
 Joh. 7. 52. *and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no Prophet.* If they had searched and looked themselves, they would have found, that Christ was born in *Bethlehem*, and not in *Galilee*. But where men are strongly prejudiced, any thing serves for evidence and demonstration ; whereas all the arguments on the other side shall be despised and contemned. How captious were they on all occasions towards our Saviour, lying in wait to entrap him with questions, to pervert his words, and draw blasphemy out of the most innocent expressions ? And when none of all these things could do, they use all the ways of fraud, malice, and injustice to destroy the Saviour of the world as a Malefactor and Blasphemer. Was not here now a mighty advantage, which the Authority of the present Church among the Jews of that time had, above the guidance of the Law and the Prophets ? And the knowledge St.

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Paul had of the same temper being in them still might justly make him decline their judgment, and appeal only to the Law and the Prophets, for the ground and rule of his Faith.

2. For the object of his worship, he appeals to the best Antiquity, I worship the God of my Fathers. i. e. I bring no new Religion among you, but the very same in substance with that which all the Jews have owned; so some render *Deo Patrio*, the God whom all my Brethren acknowledge, but he rather understands it of the same God that was worshipped by Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, *quem majores nostri coluerunt*; so St. Peter in his preaching to the people concerning the resurrection of Christ, to avoid the imputation of Novelty, saith, *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus*; and again to the Sanhedrin he saith, *The God of our Fathers raised up Jesus*; and St. Paul, *The God of our Fathers hath chosen thee*; in the use of which expressions they purposely declare, that they had no thoughts of bringing in any new Religion among them, contrary to what God had of old declared to the Patriarchs.

archs. The main things in which the Jews objected innovation to them, did either concern the bringing in some new doctrine, or the reformation of corruptions among them.

1. For their doctrine; that either concerned the *Messias*, or a *future State*. For the doctrine of the *Messias* it was as ancient as the records of any revelation from God were. It was the great promise made to the *Patriarchs* long before the Law of *Moses*; and even *Moses* AAs 7. 37. himself speaks of him, as *St. Steven* proves to them; and *David*, and *Isaiab*, and *Jeremiah*, and *Ezekiel*, and *Daniel*, and *Micah*, and *Malachi*, as the Apostles at large prove in their writings. Why should this then be accounted any new doctrine which they all believed and received? If the Question be only whether Christ were that *Messias* or no; for that, they desire nothing more than the testimony of the *Law* and the *Prophets*, and the *Miracles* wrought by him; but they had no reason to quarrel with them upon their belief, for such an alteration of the state of things which themselves believed must be when the *Messias* came; for in him not only the Nation of the Jews, but all the Nations

of the earth were to be blessed; which was inconsistent with supposing the Ceremonial Law to continue in its force and obligation; being particularly suited to one people lying within such a compass as *they might* three times a year attend upon the service in the Temple at *Hierusalem*. If their quarrel was, concerning a future state, as though that were a new doctrine, St. Paul adds in the next Verse, *That themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead both of the just and the unjust*. And in his defence before Agrippa, he saith, *And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our Fathers, unto which promise our twelve Tribes instantly serving God day and night hope to come*. So that the Apostle produces *Antiquity, Universality and Consent* in these Fundamental Articles of the Christian Religion; only a late busie and Politick Faction of the *Sadducees* opposed this doctrine; but why should their opposition signifie any thing against so full a stream running down from the first and purest Antiquity? Thus much for the positive part of their faith and doctrine.

Acts 26.6.
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2. For the negative part, or the reformation of abuses and corruptions among them; this was St. Paul's plea; Let them shew where *the God of our Fathers* imposed any of those heavy burdens which the Scribes and Pharisees place so much of their Religion in. What ground is there *in the Law and the Prophets*, for the Pharisaical Superstitions, and Vows, and Severities to themselves in fetching blood and knocking their heads against the walls, and different garbs and dresses to appear more holy unto men, with many other customs of theirs, the observation of which was made so great a part of the Religion of their devoutest men? And it is a strange thing they should think it impossible such things should come in among them, without great notice being taken of it; for although sudden and violent changes may have all the circumstances known, yet it is not to be expected in more insensible and gradual alterations. A man may tell when a violent Fever seiz'd upon him and inflamed his blood, but he cannot do so by a Hectick or a Consumption; must he therefore believe himself well, because he cannot tell the punctual time when he fell sick. We may

may easily describe the circumstances of a Landflood which overflows the banks, and bears all before it, but we cannot do so by the coming in of the Tide, which steals in secretly and insensibly, and no man can assign the place where the salt and fresh water first mix together. Superstition is a Hædick Fever to Religion, it by degrees consumes the vitals of it, but comes on insensibly, and is not easily discovered till it be hard to be cured. At first, it may be some devout but indiscreet men made way for it, who love to find out some Modes of devotion different from the rest of the world, which are greedily embraced by such who admire and follow them; this example taking, another begins and sets up for a more refined way than the former; and so the design spreads, till at last true piety and goodness be swallowed up by superstitious fopperies. Which is the most probable account of all the Pharisaical corruptions; some of whose observations might be begun at first with a good mind, and by the devout persons of that time; but afterwards, every one that had a sower look and a worse nature than ordinary, thought it not enough to follow the example of others,

others, but like a great *Physician* he must have his *Nostrum's*, something of his own finding out, a new garb, or ceremony, or posture of devotion, whereby he may be taken notice of, and admired for his sanctity. Thus that fardle of superstitious rites was gathered up among the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* in our *Saviour's* time, whom he most severely upon all occasions rebukes for their hypocrisie, in placing so much of their Religion in them. And thus much for the way taken by *St. Paul* to vindicate Christianity from the imputations of being a *new Sect* or *Herésie*, by an appeal to *Scripture* and the *best Antiquity*.

3. There remains only, the *freedom and courage* expressed by him in owning his Religion, notwithstanding these false imputations. *But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which is called herésie, &c.* He abhorred that mean and base-spirited principle, which makes it lawful for men to deny their Religion when it brings them into danger; he studied no secret arts of compliance with his Adversaries to secure himself; he did not decline appearing, though to the hazard of his life in so just a cause.

cause. He valued his Religion beyond his own safety, and regarded not all the calumnies and reproaches of his enemies, as long as he made this his constant exercise, *to keep a conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards men.* And this he elsewhere saith, afforded him more inward comfort and satisfaction, than all the crafts and policy in the world could give him. *For our rejoycing is this,* saith he, *the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.* There is nothing inspires men with so much courage, as integrity and uprightness of mind doth; and such persons who have the comfort of that, have not only better hopes as to another world, but oftentimes escape better as to this, than others do; for even their enemies cannot but esteem them: whereas the fawning, sneaking and flattering hypocrite that will do or be any thing for his own advantage, is despised by those he courts, hated by good men, and at last tormented by his own conscience, for being false to God and Religion. But we may see here in *St. Paul* a great instance

stance of true *Christian magnanimity*; he was sensible how great both the malice and quality of his enemies were; he knew he was to answer before a Judge, that regarded nothing either of Justice or Religion; yet he neither flatters his Judge, nor betrays any distrust of him: he doth not bespatter his enemies, nor discover any fear of them; but with a modest freedom and manly courage owns the main part of their accusation, and effectually vindicates his own innocency and his Religion together. For even *Felix* himself, although a man otherwise very capable of being wrought upon by some ways of address, of which we read, *Ver. 26.* yet the *High Priest* and the *Elders* with their eloquent *Tertullus* were forced to return as they came, and leave *St. Paul* under the name of a *Prisoner*, but enjoying the conveniences of *liberty*, *ver. 23.*

I have now gone thorough all the parts of the Text, with a respect to *St. Paul* and the *Authority* of the *Jewish Church*, which was engaged against him; it may now be justly expected that I make *Application* of what I have said, to our own *State* and *Condition*. Thanks be to God, we are not brought to such

a trial as *St. Paul* was, we enjoy the liberty of speaking for our selves and our Religion, and not only speaking for it, but professing and owning it. And may we ever do so! But we have busie and restless Adversaries abroad, the factors of the *High Priest* and *Elders* at *Rome*, who have as much spight and malice against us, as ever those of *Hierusalem* had against *St. Paul*; and they have their *Tertullus's* too, men of art and insinuation, and who manage their cause against us, just as he did against *St. Paul*, they charge us with bringing in new *Sects* under the pretence of *Reformation*; or with rejecting the Authority of the present Church which we were bound to obey, and thereby laying the Foundation of *Faction* and *Schism*. These are heavy charges, but they are no other than those the *High Priest* and the *Elders* made against *St. Paul*; and thanks be to God, his *Defence* and *Vindication* is ours too, for we appeal to *Scripture* and the *best* and *purest Antiquity*; and desire to be judged according to these. These three things therefore I shall speak to, before I conclude,

I. That the same reasons which they produce against the *Reformation* would have

have held against the spreading of Christianity at first.

2. That the same *Defence* which St. Paul made for Christianity will justify the *Reformation*.

3. That we have all reason to follow the courage of St. Paul in owning and defending our Religion, notwithstanding the imputations which are cast upon it.

1. That the same reasons which they produce against the *Reformation* would have held against Christianity at first. What have all the clamours of our Adversaries for above a hundred years come to, but the very same which I have already mention'd as the Jews Objections against Christianity, *viz. Novelty, and Faction?*
 "Where was your Church before the
 "Reformation? produce your successi-
 "on in all Ages of persons who agreed
 "in all things with you. Where were
 "those distinct bodies of men who found
 "fault with those corruptions that you
 "pretend to reform? Our Church hath
 "had a constant and glorious succession
 "of Bishops, and Martyrs, and Confessors,
 "and religious Orders of Men, Virgins
 "and Widows. But supposing such a
 "distinct succession were not necessary,
 "yet

"yet shew how it was possible for so many errors and corruptions to come into the Church, and no one take notice of them and discover them. Where was the watchfull eye of Providence over all the Church all this while? What, all the Pastors asleep at once? or all conspiring together to deceive their posterity! Besides, how can the Protestants ever answer their rejecting the Authority of the present Church which they lived under? and to whom God had promised his infallible Spirit? how can they clear themselves from faction and disturbing the peace of the Christian world, which lived in so great unity and peace before? This is the summ of their Objections against the *Reformation*, which are the very same we have mention'd before, as produced by the Jews against Christianity. If the arguments are good now, they were so then; if they were good then, for all that I can see the *High Priest* and *Elders* were in the right, and *St. Paul* in the wrong; if they were not good then, but are now, some remarkable disparity must be shewed between their case and ours; and that must lie in shewing these three things.

1. That

1. That the Christian Church hath greater infallibility promised than the Jewish had.

2. That the first Christians had greater reason to reject the Authority of that Church, than the Reformers had, as to the Church of Rome.

3. That the Causes of corruptions in the Jewish Church, could not hold in the Christian. But if none of these can be made good, then the case will appear to be the very same.

I. It cannot be proved that the Christian Church hath greater infallibility promised than the Jewish had. Of which we have this plain evidence, that one of the strongest arguments produced for the infallibility of the Christian Church is taken from the Promises made to the Jewish. How often hath *Dent. 17. 8, 9, 10.* been made use of to prove infallibility in the Christian Church? If they had any better arguments in the New Testament, would they ever run so far back to a Command that most evidently relates to the Jewish constitution? Where hath ever God promised that he would dwell in *St. Peter's* at *Rome*, as he did, that he would dwell in his Temple at *Hierusalem*? What

boastings

boastings and triumphs would there have been, if any such words had been in the Gospel concerning Rome, as there were of old concerning *Hierusalem*; viz. *that God had sanctified it, that his Name might be there for ever; and his eyes and his heart should be there, perpetually*? What pitifull proofs in comparison of this, are all those brought out of the New Testament for the Authority and Infallibility of the *Roman Church*? What are all the promises of the Spirit made to the Apostles, and remarkably accomplished in them, to this plain promise of God's particular presence in that place for ever? Suppose *St. Peter* had privileges above the rest of the *Apostles*; how comes the entail to be made to all his successors, and only at *Rome* and no where else? Where are the Deeds kept, that contain this gift? Why are they not produced during all this contest? And yet we see in the *Jewish Church* where such a promise was made to a particular place, no such thing as Infallibility was implied in it.

2. It cannot be shewed, that the first *Christians* had greater reason to reject the Authority of the *Jewish Church*, than our *Reformers* had to reject that of the

^a Chron. 7.
16.

the Church of Rome. I know here it will be presently said, *That the Apostles saw the Miracles of Christ, and wrought many themselves, and received an immediate Commission from Jesus Christ in whom the Churches infallibility was then seated.* All which I grant to be true in it self, but cannot be pleaded by them who contend for absolute obedience to the present Churches Authority as infallible. My reason is, because upon this principle they could not believe Christ to be the true *Messias*; for his being the true *Messias* depended upon two things, viz. *the fulfilling of Prophecies*, and *the truth of his Miracles*; now according to their principles, no man could be certain of either of these without the Authority of the Church; for the fulfilling of Prophecies depended upon the sense of many obscure places of Scripture, about which they say there is a necessity of an infallible Judge; and for Miracles, they tell us, that there is no certain way of judging true and false, but by the Authority of the Church. Now if these things be so, what ground could the first Christians have to believe Christ to be the true *Messias*, when in both these, they must oppose

oppose the Authority of the present Church?

3. They can never prove, that the same causes of corruptions do not hold as to the Christian, which did as to the Jewish Church. For the *Christian Church* in those Ages which we charge with introducing the corruptions, was degenerated into greater *Ignorance, Barbarism, Luxury* and *Superstition*, than the *Jewish Church* in the time of its dark-nels from the cessation of *Prophecy* till the coming of Christ. Our Adversaries themselves confess, that for a long time, there was nothing either of Learning or Humanity among them; nothing but ease, and luxury, and ambition, and all manner of Wickedness among the chief Rulers among them; nay, even at *Rome* there was a succession of fifty of their *High Priests*, so remarkable for their wickedness, that *Annas* and *Caiaphas* (setting only aside their condemning Christ) were *Saints* in comparison of them. And is it now any wonder that such errors and corruptions should come into that Church, as those we charge them with? Nay, rather the greatest Wonder seems to be, that any thing of Christianity should

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be

be preserved among them. But besides the *fortitudo* of those times, we have many other causes to assign of the corruptions introduced among them; as a *Compliance with Gentilism* in many of their Customs and Superstitions; *Affection of new Modes of Devotion*, among indiscreet *Zealots*; *Ambition* and constant endeavour to advance the Authority and Interests of the Priesthood above all Secular Power; and when for a long time these had been gathering the rude materials together, then the *Moorish Philosophy* happening to creep in among them, the *Monks* began to busie themselves therein, and by the help of that, a little better to digest that Mass and Heap of corruptions, and to spend the wit they had to defend and improve them.

2. But against all these, we stand upon the same defence that St. Paul did: we appeal to *Scripture*, and the *best and purest Antiquity*. We pretend to bring in no new Doctrines, and therefore no *Miracles* can be required of us, which the *Apostles* wrought to confirm Christ's being the true *Messias*, who was to alter that State which God himself had once appointed: All that we plead

for,

for, is that the Religion established by Christ may serve our turn, and that which is recorded by the Apostles and Evangelists; to these we make our constant appeal, and have the same reason to decline the Authority of the *Roman Church*, that St. Paul had as to the *High Priest* and *Elders*, when he appealed to *the Law and the Prophets*: Nay, we have somewhat more reason; because God had once appointed the *High Priests* and *Rulers* of the *People* among them, but the Supremacy of the *Roman Church* was a meer Usurpation begun by Ambition, advanced by Forgery, and defended by Cruelty. But we do not only believe all that is written in the *Law and the Prophets*, but we worship the God of our Fathers; of the Fathers of the first and purest Ages of the Christian Church; we are not only content to make use of their Authority in these matters, but we make our appeal to them; and have begged our Adversaries ever since the *Reformation*, to prove the points in difference between us, by the testimony of the first six hundred years; but from that time to this, they are as far from proving any one point, as ever they were.

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3. What

*Advocate
of Consci-
ence-Liber-
ty, p. 236,
247.*

3. What then follows from all this, but that we should imitate St. Paul's courage in owning and defending our Religion, notwithstanding all the false imputations which are cast upon it. What a shame would it be for us, meanly and basely to betray that Cause, for which our Ancestors sacrific'd their lives? Is the *Remiss Religion* any thing better than it was then? What error in Doctrine, or corruption in Practice have they ever reformed? Nay, have they not rather established and confirmed them more? Are they any thing kinder to us than they have been? No; notwithstanding all their late pleadings for *Evangelical Peace and Charity*, they can at the same time tell us, *That the Statutes against Hereticks are still in force against us, as condemned Hereticks*; and we are not so dull, not to apprehend the meaning of that; viz. that were it in their power they could lawfully burn us to morrow. And is not this the height of *Evangelical Love and Sweetness*? Who can but admire the persuasiveness of such arguments to *Gospel meekness*, and melt at the tenderness and bowels of an *Inquisition*? Let us not deceive our selves; it is not the mean com-

compliance of any in going half way towards them, will serve their turn : there is no chewing their Pills, all must be swallowed together, or as good in their opinion to have none at all. For not only plain *Hereticks*, but the *favourers* and *suspected of Heresie* are solemnly excommunicated every year in the famous *Bull of Cæna Domini* ; and *Lindwood* their *English Canonist*, tells us whom they account suspected of Heresie, *viz. All that shew common civility to Hereticks, or give Alms to them, or that once hear their Sermons.* This last indeed hath been mitigated by a considerable party among them ; for notwithstanding the opposition of the *Jesuits* in this matter, and seven *Breves* obtain'd by their means from several *Popes* forbidding all *Roman* Catholicks to come to our Churches ; yet the Secular Priests have contended for it as a thing lawfull for them not only to come to our Prayers, and hear our Sermons, but to partake of our Sacraments too. Which they may allow, while they hope to carry on their interest better that way ; but if once, (which God forbid) the Tide should turn with them, then the old Laws of their Church must prevail, and nothing will

Lindwood
Provinc l.
5. tit. de
heret.
p. 161. 2.

Vertum.
Rom. p 104,
105.

*Advoc. for
Lib. p. 24*

*V. Append.
ad Nicol.
Eyneric. Di.
rector. In-
quisit. Ven.
1607.*

will be thought so wholesome as an Inquisition. Which it is strange, their Advocates for Liberty of Conscience, should call only, *Laws in Catholick Countries against Hereticks, and not Laws of the Church*, when there are extant above a hundred *Bulls and Breves* of *Popes* establishing, confirming, and enlarging the *Inquisition*. Since then no favour is to be expected from their Church (for whatever they pretend, all the severity comes from thence, all the favour and mitigation from the clemency and wisdom of Princes) let us endeavour to strengthen our selves, by a hearty zeal for our Religion, and using the best means to confirm and uphold it. And since *the Children of this world are in their Generation wiser than the Children of light*; there are some things practised among them, which may deserve our imitation: and those are,

1. A mighty Industry and Zeal in promoting their Cause; they have learn'd of their Predecessors to *compass Sea and Land to gain one Profelite*. They insinuate themselves into all companies, stick at no pains, accommodate themselves to all humours, and are provided

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one way or other to gratifie persons of all inclinations; for they have retirement for the melancholy, business for the active, idleness for the lazy, honour for the ambitious, splendour for the vain, severities for the sower and hardy, and a good dose of pleasures for the soft and voluptuous. It is not their *Way*, but their *Zeal* and *Industry* I propound to our imitation; I know not how it comes to pass, but so it often happens, that they who are most secure of truth on their side, are most apt to be remiss and careless; and to comfort themselves with some good old sayings, as *God will provide*, and *Truth will prevail*, though they lie still, and do nothing towards it; but certainly such negligence is inexcusable, where the matter is of so great importance, the Adversaries so many, and an account must be given shortly in another world, of what men have done or suffered for their Religion in this.

2. Submission and Obedience to their Spiritual Governours; the greatest strength of that prevailing Faction lies in the close union and cohesion of all the parts together, by a settled subordination of one to another; which tho'

not always effectual; yet the contrivance is so laid, as if there were as much Truth and Reason as Policy in it, cannot be deny'd to be fit for upholding the interest of a Church. But we plead not for their blind and absolute obedience; but sure the Apostles had some meaning when they bid the Christians

Heb. 13. 17. *obey them that had the rule over them, and*

2 Thel. 5. *submit themselves, for they watched for*

13. *their souls; and esteem them very highly*

in love for their Works sake: not, be ready on all occasions to reproach and contemn them, and be glad of any idle stories wherewith to bespatter them. If men would once understand and practise the duties of humility, modesty, and submission to the Government which God hath set over us, we might have greater hopes to secure the interest of our Church and Religion, than without it we can ever have. For spiritual pride, conceitedness in Religion, and a Spirit of contradiction to Superiours are to be reckoned among some of the worst Symptoms of a declining Church.

3. *Lessening of differences among themselves; for although with all their care they cannot prevent them, yet they still endeavour to extenuate them, as much*

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much as possible, and boast of their U-
 nity among strangers to their Churches
 affairs. The great wisdom of the Court
 of Rome lies in this, that as long as per-
 sons are true to them in the main points
 wherein the difference lies, they can let
 them alone in smaller differences among
 themselves; and not provoke either of
 the dissenting parties, unless they are
 sure to suppress them, lest they give
 them occasion to withdraw from their
 communion. They can allow different
 Rites and Cereémonies in the several Or-
 ders of Religion among them, and grant
 exemptions and privileges in particular
 cases; as long as they make them ser-
 viceable to their common interest by
 upholding and strengthening them. Would
 to God we could at last learn this Wil-
 dom from our enemies, not to widen
 our own differences by inveterate heats,
 bitterness and animosities among our
 selves; but to find out ways whereby
 even the dissenters in smaller things may
 be made usefull for the maintaining the
 common interest of our Church and
 Religion. And it is a vain thing in any
 to go about to separate these; or ever
 to hope that the *Protestant Religion* can
 be preserved among us without up-
 holding

holding the Church of England. For if once that *Bulwark* be demolished, our Adversaries will despise all the lesser *Sconces* and *Pallisado's*: they will be but like *Romulus* his *Walls*, which they will easily leap over at their pleasure. I pray God then (and I hope you will all joyn with me in it) that he would vouchsafe to our Governours the Spirit of Wisdom and Peace, to find out the most proper means for the establishment of our Church and Religion; and I pray God give us all a Spirit of knowledge to understand the things which belong to our peace, and of Love and Unity to endeavour after them.

S E R

SERMON II.

Preached

November V. 1673.

A T

St. Margaret's Westminster.

St. Matth. VII. 15, 16.

Beware of false Prophets, which come to you in Sheeps cloathing, but inwardly they are ravening Wolves. Ye shall know them by their Fruits.

IF we were to judge of the nature of Christianity by the designs and practices of some, who would be thought the only true and Catholick Christians, we should have no great reason to esteem it our honour to be called by his Name, who first brought this Religion into the world. For if the
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Christian Religion did indeed justifie all the *fraud and treachery*, the *mischief and cruelty* which hath been either acted or designed by men under the glorious pretence of advancing the interest of the *Catholick Church*, we might better chuse not to be *Christians*, than to be such *men*: Because whatever Religion overthrows the common principles and duties of humane nature, such as those of *Civil obedience, integrity and humanity* are, cannot be supposed a Religion proper or intended by God for Mankind; whose great end in Religion is to improve and rectifie, and not to debauch or corrupt the dispositions of men. Men need no Religion to instruct them in the arts of deceiving, the contrivances of malice, or the methods of revenge; such *fruits* as these spring up too easily in our corrupt and degenerate natures, which need no great force or improvement to bring them forth: But when the warmth of the Sun shall be joyned with the fruitfulness of the soil, when men are encouraged to pursue their own natural inclinations by the most powerful motives of Religion, what bounds can be set to the growth and increase of these accursed fruits? Of all Religions
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in the world, we might have thought the Christian least liable to be abused to such ill purposes; for it was one of *Machiavel's* quarrels against Christianity, that by its precepts of meekness and patience, it rendered men unfit for such great undertakings, which could not be accomplished without something of cruelty and inhumanity, whereas the old Religions by the multitude of Sacrifices did inure men to blood and destruction, and so made them fitter for any enterprize. And *Machiavel* was certainly in the right, if Religion were intended only to make men *Butchers*: or to instruct them in the use of Swords and Gun-powder. Nay, the Religion of *Mahomet* is in this respect to be very much preferred before the Christian, for that makes it not only lawfull to destroy those of a different Religion, but enrolls them for Martyrs that die in the Field, and makes the blood of enemies as meritorious, as we do that of the Cross. But that is reserved as the peculiar honour of the Christian Religion, that it commands the subduing all the brutish and savage inclinations of men to acts of revenge and cruelty; that it restores humane nature to it self by its precepts

precepts of meekness, mercy, peaceableness, and universal charity; that it advances it to a divine nature by the imitation of God himself, in shewing kindness to enemies, and overcoming evil with good. This is the Religion established by our Lord and Saviour in this excellent Sermon on the Mount, where in the scope and design of Christianity is delivered with the greatest plainness and perspicuity; which (if it be possible for us to judge of his meaning by the clearest expressions) was far enough from being the setting up a Monarchy in the Church to which all the Kings of the Christian world are by their Baptism bound to vail their Crowns, and lay their Scepters at its feet: or in case they do not, that then this Spiritual Monarch may excommunicate, depose, and deprive Princes of their Government, and dissolve all the obligations between their Subjects and them: and make it lawfull for them to depose them: We find not the least footstep of any thing tending this way, where our Saviour speaks most advantageously concerning the honour of his Disciples; which honour he represents by things which set forth their usefulness in common: *Te*

are the Salt of the Earth, ye are the light Matth. 5.
13, 14
of the World; and not by setting up one
above all the rest, far above all *Princi-
palities and Powers*, to whom Kings and
Princes, and all People are bound to be
subject, if they regard their salvation.
If any such thing as this had been so
material a part of the Christian Doctrine,
as some imagine, if it had been so ne-
cessary to salvation, it is somewhat
strange, that when our Blessed Saviour
gave so many directions in order to sal-
vation he should give not so much as
the least intimation concerning this. And
yet he saith, at the end of this Sermon,
Every one that heareth these sayings of Matth. 7. 24
mine, and doeth them, is like unto a wise
man that build his house upon a rock; not
super hanc Petram, i. e. according to
the *Roman Gloss*, upon the Pope's Au-
thority; but upon such a firm founda-
tion as will never fail him. And what
is it which our Saviour endeavours to
perswade men to, in order to so firm a
settlement of their minds against all the
assaults of persecutions? *viz.* to humi-
lity, meekness, goodness, universal ho-
liness, to the love of God and Mankind,
to sincerity in devotion, dependence on
Providence, prayer, and doing as we
would

would be done by: this is the substance of the Christian Law delivered by the Son of God; than which nothing can be imagined more contrary to the Spirit of Faction and disobedience, of cruelty and revenge, and that covered over with a pretence of zeal for Religion. But he who gave these excellent precepts, did foresee, that there would arise *men who should preach and prophesie in his Name, and in his Name cast out Devils, and do wonderfull works:* that yet for all their fair shews and pretences to the world should be of a temper and disposition directly contrary to the Gospel; and therefore it was necessary for all Christians, as they valued their own welfare, to have an eye to them, lest they should be deceived by them: which is the meaning of our Saviour in these words; *Beware of false Prophets which come to you in Sheeps cloathing, but inwardly they are ravening Wolves: By their fruits ye shall know them.* Wherein we have these two things considerable:

1. The Caution given, *Beware of false Prophets*, together with the ground of that Caution, *For they come to you in Sheeps cloathing, but inwardly are ravening Wolves.*

2. The

2. The Rule laid down whereby we are to judge of them: *By their Fruits ye shall know them.*

1. The Caution given, *Beware of false Prophets.* There were two sorts of deceivers our Saviour gives his Disciples particular caution against, *viz. false Christs and false Prophets*; the *false Christs* were those who pretended that they were the persons who were foretold by the Prophets that should come for the redemption of his People; *for many shall come in my Name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.* Not as though they pretended to be sent by Christ, but that they would assume to themselves the Dignity and Authority of the true Messias; and of this sort there were many that arose among the Jews, such as *Theudas, Jonathas, Barchochebas*, and many others. But besides these, there were *false Prophets*, some of which did openly oppose Christianity, such as that *Bar-Jesus* mentioned in the *Acts*; but there were others who pretended to own Christianity, and to prophesie in the Name of Christ, whom St. Peter calls *false Teachers*; and whom St. Paul describes by the same character that our Saviour here doth:

Mat. 24. 24.

Mat. 24. 5.

Acts 13. 6.

Mat. 7. 31.

1 Pet. 2. 1.

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But

Act. 20. 29. *But I know that after my departing shall*
 30. *grievous Wolves enter in among you,*
not sparing the flock: also of your own
selves shall men arise, speaking perverse
things, to draw disciples after them:
whom he elsewhere sets forth by their
Sheeps cloathing; when he saith, that
 Rom. 16. *by good words and fair speeches they de-*
 18. *ceive the hearts of the simple, whom he*
 2 Cor. 11. *calls false Apostles, deceitfull workers,*
 13. *transforming themselves into the Apostles*
of Christ: which carry'd so fair a shew
and appearance among the people, that
St. Paul was very full of jealousie and
apprehension concerning them, lest they
should by degrees draw away his Dis-
ciples from the simplicity of the Go-
spel of Christ. For I am jealous over you,
 V. 2, 3. *saith he, with godly jealousie; but I fear,*
lest by any means as the Serpent beguiled
Eve through his subtilty, so your minds
should be corrupted from the simplicity that
is in Christ. It may seem strange, that
after the Apostles had with so much
care and diligence planted the Gospel of
Christ in several Churches, they should
expresse so much fear as they did, (and
especially St. Paul) of their being so
soon corrupted by these false Teachers,
as he doth, not only of the Corinthians,
 but

but of the Galatians too. *I marvel*, Gal. 1. 6.
saith he, that ye are so soon removed from
him that called you into the grace of Christ.
And O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitch- 3. 1.
ed you, that you should not obey the truth?
and of the Ephesians, That we henceforth Eph. 4. 14.
be no more Children tossed to and fro, and
carried about with every wind of doctrine,
by the sleight of men, and cunning crafti-
ness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive :
and of the Colossians, Beware lest any man Col. 2. 8.
spoil you through Philosophy and vain de-
ceit, after the tradition of men, after the
rudiments of the world, and not after
Christ. And let no man beguile you of 18.
your reward in a voluntary humility and
worshipping of Angels : and of the He-
brews, Be not carried about with divers Heb. 13. 9.
and strange doctrines. But we shall see
this great Caution, delivered here first
by our Saviour, and afterwards by his
Apostles, was no more than necessary,
if we consider under what pretences
they came, and what Arts and Methods
these false Teachers used to delude and
seduce the people.

1. They pretended to the same infal-
 lible Spirit which the Apostles had.
 And this may be the reason, why our
 Saviour doth not here call them *false*

Teachers, but false Prophets. For Prophecy in its proper notion doth not relate to future events, but to divine Inspiration. So St. Chrysostom saith *πρὸς*

S. Chrys. in
1. ad Cor.
hom. 36.

Auct. de
Mundo, c. 1.
Plut. de def.
Orac.

Lucian in
Vis. Phil.

φῆτις is the same with *ἐγμνευτις*, a Prophet, saith he is the same with God's Interpreter: so the word *πρὸςφῆτις* is used in Greek Authors, as in the Author of the Book *de Mundo*, *πρὸςφῆτις* is rendered by *Apuleius effari cæteris*; and *Festus* saith, that the Latines called those Prophets, which were *oraculorum interpretes*; and so the Hebrew words are taken in the same sense without any relation to foretelling things to come.

Exod. 7.1. So Moses is said to be a God to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy Brother shall be thy Prophet: i. e. thy interpreter.

Gen. 20.7. Abraham called a Prophet, and the Patriarchs are

Pf. 105.15. all called Prophets, in regard that Divine Revelations were more common before the written Law: but the reason why the name of Prophecy came to be restrained to the prediction of things to come, was because future events lying most out of the reach of mens knowledge, the foretelling of these was looked upon as the greatest evidence of divine inspiration. But in the New Testament, prophesying is often taken for the gift

gift of interpreting the hard places of the Old Testament, as *Themistius* calls one *Themist.* that interpreted the hard places in *Aristo- Or. 1.* *tle*, Περί την Ἀριστοτέλους; thence Prophesying is reckoned among the spiritual gifts; and so these *false Prophets* were not men who pretended to fore-tell future events, but to the assistance of an infallible Spirit, in giving the sense of Scripture; and by this pretence they transformed themselves into the *Apo-* *1 Cor. 12.* *10.* *stles* of Christ, giving out that they enjoyed equal privileges with them: whereby three things may be observed which deserve our consideration.

1. That nothing is more easie, than for false Teachers to pretend to an infallible Spirit; such whom our Saviour and his Apostles did warn men especially against, pretended to be *Prophets* and *Apostles*, and to know the mind of Christ better than they who truly had the assistance of the Holy Ghost. Some think the bare pretence to *Infallibility* ought in such a divided state of the Christian world to be entertained as the best expedient to end Controversies, and that Church which doth alone challenge it, ought on that account to be submitted to; as though the most confident pretenders

Epiph. bar.
30.

were to be soonest believed: so they will be, do what we can, by the weakest sort of mankind, but by none who have and use their judgments. If bare pretences were sufficient, *Simon Magus* did bid the fairest to be *Head* of the *Church*, for he pretended to be *God's Vicar upon Earth*, or *the divine Power sent down from Heaven*, which none of the Apostles pretended to. Why then did not the Christian Church submit to *Montanus* his *Paraclete*, when no other Christians pretended to such an immediate inspiration as he did? And certainly *Prisca* and *Maximilla* were better *Oracles*, than a *Crucifix* was to a late *Pope*. If there be any thing beyond a bare pretence to an infallible Spirit, we desire to see better arguments for it, than the *false Apostles* could produce for theirs; if there be nothing but a bare pretence, we must leave the *Pope* and *Quakers* to dispute it out.

2. That the pretence to Divine Inspiration is very dangerous to the Christian Church. For we see what mischief it did in the Apostolical times, when there was a true infallible Spirit in the Apostles of Christ to discover and confute it; yet notwithstanding all the

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care and diligence of the Apostles many were seduced by it. For those who have the least ground, do commonly use the greatest confidence, and denounce *Hell* and *Damnation* the soonest to those who despise and reject them. Which being expressed with a grim countenance and a terrible accent, startles and shakes more persons of weak judgments and timorous dispositions, than all the reasons and arguments they could ever produce. This hath always been the method of deceivers, to pretend to the highest, and then make the sin of those who do not believe them as great, as if the thing were real. Thus the rejecting mens Fanatick Pretences to Revelations and Extasies is cryed out upon, as blaspheming the *Holy Ghost*; and refusing to believe upon the *Roman Churches* pretended Infallibility, is called no less, than denying God's Veracity. We profess to believe the true inspiration of the *Holy Ghost*, and every tittle of what God hath revealed: but we will not swallow pretences for Evidences, nor Enthusiasms for Revelations. For as the true Religion was at first founded upon Divine Inspiration; so we know that the greatest corruptions of it have

*Maim. de
Idol. c. 1.
sect. 3.*

sprung from the pretence to it. *Maimonides* saith, that *the first beginning of Pagan Idolatry, was owing to the pretence of Inspiration, and immediate Revelations for the Worship of the Stars.* However that be. we are certain the Devil made use of *Oracles* and *Enthusiasms*, as the most effectual means to bring men to the practice of it, both in *Ægypt*, in *Greece*, and many other places; and they who have taken the pains to collect them, have reckoned one hundred and sixty several Oracles that were in request in the times of Paganism. After Christianity began to be settled in the world, the greatest corrupters of it were the pretenders to divine Inspiration, as the false Apostles, the *Gnosticks*, the *Montanists*, and many others. And the pretence to this, is so much the more dangerous, because it bids high, and is easily taken up, and requires no learning or wit, but only confidence to manage it, and may carry men by impulses and motions to the most unwarrantable actions, and where it meets with an Enthusiastical temper, is very hardly removed.

3. We may observe, that a truly infallible Spirit is not sufficient to put an end to Controversies. For when was
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that ever more evident, than in the holy Apostles after the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost upon them? Many are apt to say now, *That there will never be an end of these wranglings, and schisms, and disputes in Religion, till there be an infallible Judge to put an issue to them;* But were there not infallible Judges in the Apostles time, that gave infinitely greater evidence of an infallible Spirit, than any ever since have done? But were Controversies put to an end by it? No certainly, when the Apostles complain so much of the Schisms, and Divisions, and Errors, and Heresies, and Disputes, and Quarrellings that were among them. And if so great an evidence of a Divine Spirit manifested by their Miracles, had no greater effect then, what can we imagine the shadow of St. Peter, or the dream of infallibility can do in the *Roman Church*? And give me leave to say, it is the Inquisition and not Infallibility, which keep things quiet among them. But God deliver us from such an end of Controversies.

2. The false Prophets and Apostles pretended to greater mortification and self-denial than the true Apostles did. St. Hierom understands their coming in
Hier. in loc.
Sheeps

Sheeps cloathing, of this pretence to greater severity and rigour of life than others used. Those that go about to deceive, must appear to have something extraordinary this way, to raise an admiration of them among those who judge of Saints more by their *looks* than by their *actions*. Whereas the greatest Hypocrites have been always the greatest pretenders this way. Our blessed Saviour was so far from making any shew of this rigour and severity, that he was reproached by the Scribes and Pharisees, those mortified Saints, *to be a wine-bibber, a friend to Publicans and Sinners*. Alas! what heavenly looks, and devout gestures, and long prayers, and frequent fastings had they more than Christ or his Disciples? The poor Widows were so ravished with their long prayers, that they thought they could not do better with their houses or estates, than to put them into the hands of such mortified men to the world: till they found, notwithstanding *their Sheeps cloathing*, that by their *devouring they were ravening Wolves*. Those that seem so much to fly from the world, do but as Soldiers in a battle sometimes do, that seem to fly from their enemies, but only with

a design to make them follow, that they may have the more advantage upon them. One would think no men were so afraid of the world, as they that seem to run so fast from it, but they lay their Ambuscado's to entrap it; and it once it gets into their hand, no men know better how to be revenged upon it. What pleasant incongruities are these? to see men grow rich by Vows of Poverty, retired from the world, and yet the most unquiet and busie in it? Mortified to the pleasures of life, and yet delighting most in following the Courts of Princes? Such kind of men were the *Pharisees* of old: and who would have thought, that under the Name of that *Jesus*, who so much detested and abhorred their hypocrisie, there should others arise, who have out-done them in their own way? As though Christ had said, *Except your righteousness be like the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* But we need not wonder that in these later ages such pretences should be made use of, since in the very beginning of the Christian Church, these were the common arts of deceivers. They found fault with the Apostles as giving too much liberty to men in the use

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of Marriage and Meats; but they thought the state of the one was not agreeable to their sanctity, nor the free use of the other consistent with their severe and mortified life. *For they did forbid to marry, and commanded to abstain from meats.* They would not make use of the liberty which God had allowed, but they were ready to take that which he had forbidden: therefore the Apostle gives the true character of them when he saith, *they spake lyes in hypocrisie.* There was an outward shew of sanctity and severity in their doctrine; but no men are observed by *Ecclesiastical Historians* to have been more eager of what God had forbidden, than they who were so scrupulous about what God had allowed. We do not say, the case is altogether the same, *where men are forbidden absolutely, as though Marriage were unlawfull in it self;* which was the case of the ancient Hereticks; and *where it is forbidden only to a particular Order of men,* as it is in the Church of Rome: but this we say, that where it is forbidden to a *particular Order of men,* as though it did not become the *sanctity* of that Order; this is reviving that hypocrisie which St. Paul condemns: especially when it is forbidden on such an account

as

as Pope *Siricius* did it, *because they that* *Siric. Ep. 1. c. 7. Ep. 4. c. 9.*
are in the flesh cannot please God; which is in effect sending all married persons to Hell. This was one part of the pretended mortification of false Teachers about Marriage, the other was about Meats. *St. Paul* knew no such holiness in one sort of Meat above another, as though men could fast their bellies full of one, but the least tast of the other destroyed it. What a pleasant thing it is to account that fasting, which the unmortified *Epicures* of old accounted their most delicious feasting, *viz.* Fish and Wine! This is not doing so much as the Pharisees did, for they *appeared unto men to fast*: but in the Church of *Rome* *Matt. 6. 17.* they cannot be said to do that, unless fasting and eating be the same thing. *But may not the Church call not eating prohibited meat fasting?* No doubt it may; as well as call that no bread, which we see, and taste, and handle to be bread. However I cannot understand, but if their Church had so pleased, the eating Flesh and abstaining from Fish might have been called fasting; and so they might have made one entire Fast of a whole years eating: and notwithstanding all the pretence of fasting and mortification in that Church, I cannot

- cannot see that any man is bound by the Laws of it, to keep one *true fast* all the days of his life. But if all the mortification required, lies only in a *distinction of meats*, the false *Apostles* went beyond them in it ; for they utterly forbid some sorts, saying, *touch not, taste not, handle not* ; and not merely to shew their obedience to the commands of the Church, but that they might not gratifie the desires of the flesh, and therefore the Apostle saith, *these things* had on that account *a shew of wisdom in them* ; being in all probability taken from the severe precepts of the *Pythagorean Philosophy*, which makes him bid them,
- Col. 2. 24. *Beware lest they were spoiled through Philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, and the principles of the world, and not after Christ.* For if this sort of *mortification* were a thing so pleasing to God, the *Heathen* principles were more agreeable to his nature, than the doctrine of *Christianity*. This only requires the subduing our inward lusts, and in order to that, to keep the body in subjection ; but in the mysteries of the *Heathen Religion* far greater severities were to be undergone, in order to their participation of them. And the hardships were so great in some of their

their initiations, especially those of *Mithras*, that some died before they could pass through them: and yet for any to be admitted without them, was present death to them. They were to make confession of their sins, shave their heads, change their habits, lie upon the bare ground, fast for several days, and when they eat, it was to be only of some certain meats; these and many other severities they were to go through in order to the purifying their souls, as they thought, and bring them to the state they were in before they came into the body. Some part of these hardships the *Pythagoreans* took into their *Philosophy*; and from them the *Colossians* began to be infected with them: but St. Paul calls them only vain deceits, the commandments and doctrines of men, things that made a fair shew, but he looks upon them as corruptions of the doctrine of Christ. Yet afterwards the *Montanists* and *Encratitæ* and others were much stricter and more frequent in these fasts and abstinence, than the Catholick Christians; but the Church thought fit to condemn them, as corruptors of Christianity. By all which we see, how apt men are to be deceived by false Teachers, when they pretend to so much *Mortification* above what

what Christianity requires from them.

3. They pretended to know the mind of Christ better than the Apostles did: they pretended, that they had conversed familiarly with Christ upon earth, and understood his meaning better than the *Apostles* did. And therefore their
- 1 Cor. 1. 12. Disciples in the *Church of Corinth*, were neither for *Paul*, nor *Apollos*, nor *Cephas*, but they were only for *Christ*: and gave out that from him they understood, that what he had said concerning the *Resurrection*, was only to be understood of the *state of Regeneration*: which doctrine it seems had gotten great footing in the *Church of Corinth* by their means. They reported, that the Apostles understood only some common and ordinary things, but the *deeper and more hidden mysteries* were only made know to them: which makes *St. Paul* in his *Epistles* to those Churches which they had corrupted, speak so often of his understanding *the mysteries of God*: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world to our glory: having made known unto us the mystery of his will: whereby ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ. The true Apostles declared, that they
- kept

kept back nothing of the counsel of God, but delivered it openly and plainly, to make all men see and understand what that mystery was: the false Apostles pretended, that the Doctrine and writings of the Apostles did not contain all the great mysteries of the Gospel, but they were received from Christ's own mouth, and conveyed to others by a *secret* and *oral Tradition*. The things written by the *Evangelists* they could not deny to be true, but they were dark and obscure, and could not be understood but by the help of their *oral Tradition*: and upon this principle, *Cerinthus*, *Basilides*, *Valentinus*, and *Marcion* went, as appears *Iren. l. 3. c. 2.* by *Irenæus*. For when they saw they could never make good their Doctrines by the writings of the *New Testament*, they sought to blast the reputation of these, and set up the Authority of an *oral Tradition* above them. Men do not use to pick quarrels with their Friends; and therefore when we find any charging the Scripture with obscurity and imperfection, we have reason to believe, they hope for no comfort from it.

4. They made use of the most subtle and crafty methods of deceiving. To
G this

this end they were very busie and active, watching every opportunity; therefore St. Paul charges them with *sleight and cunning craftiness, lying in wait to deceive*: i. e. with using all the arts and tricks of deceivers: as (1.) By deep dissimulation and disguising themselves; not appearing at first to be what they really are; nor letting them understand, what their true doctrine and design is. If any of those they hope to gain, object any thing against them, how do they pity their ignorance, and revile their Teachers, that did so foully misrepresent their Doctrines to them! Alas for them poor men, they neither understand us nor our Religion! "They have taken up things upon trust, and their prejudice will not suffer them to examine things as they are. Have you not been told thus and thus concerning us, and not one word of it is true? Never trust such men more, come, be persuaded by us, and then you shall be truly enlightned. (2.) By raising prejudices against their Teachers; as they did in the Church of Corinth against St. Paul, representing him as a man of a mean and contemptible presence, and rude in speech, "Come, say they, "and

2 Cor. 10.
1. 11. 6.

“ and hear our Preachers, with what admirable eloquence and moving expressions they speak, how they dart beams of light into mens minds, and strike through the souls of men ! you would never care for this dull and obscure way of *St. Paul* more. But this is a small thing to disparage only his gifts ; “ Observe , say they , his doctrine, and see whither it tends, is not he against those that forbid to marry, and abstain from meats ? Judge now whither these loose doctrines lead men. So *St. Paul* tells us, that they had represented him *as one that walked after the flesh* ; and had prevailed so far upon the people by these sly insinuations, as though all he aimed at, was only for his own advantage, viz. that he might be popular, and get himself an interest among that rich people of *Corinth*, so that he tells them, he was fain to live upon other Churches to do them service : and he tells us afterwards the false Apostles gave the occasion of it : and in the Churches of *Galatia* they had turned his greatest friends to be his enemies, and he gives this account of it, *they would exclude us, that you might affect them.* (3.) By

2 Cor. 10. 1.

2 Cor. 11. 8.

13.

Gal. 4. 55.
16, 17.

G 2

showing

sowing Schisms and Divisions among them. This was their master-piece, to beget contentions where they could not prevail themselves. What joy was it to them to see in the Church of *Corinth*, such parties and factions made among them? *some for Paul, some for Apollos, some for Cephas*; from hence proceeded *envying, and strife, and divisions among them*; and this gave them a fair opportunity of breaking them in pieces one against another. And therefore the Apostle saw it necessary to use the utmost means to cure these divisions among them; and elsewhere beseeches the Christians *to mark them that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them; for they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple: i. e. they carry on their own designs and interests, by these means; and therefore study all the ways to foment and increase them.* “Why should the disciples of *Peter* yield to those of *Paul*, and why should not those of *Apollos* be regarded as much as either? And such was the unhappy success

cess of these mens arts in this divided Church of *Corinth*, that notwithstanding all the care of *St. Paul* to put an end to their factions, they brake out with greater fury afterwards, as appears by the Epistle of *Clemens* to them : and he *Clem. Ep. P. 2. 19.* takes notice of those who did cast the arrows of contention among them : and therefore he makes that the chief argument of his Epistle, to defeat the design of the false Teachers, by perswading them to peace and unity among themselves. (4.) By the most plausible insinuations. *By good words and fair speeches*, saith *St. Paul*, *they deceive the hearts of the simple* : they might find by their softness and gentleness that they were in *Sheeps cloathing*. How meek and humble, and insinuating are they where they have any hopes of a prey ! how do the bowels of these *ravening Wolves* yearn towards the *filly Sheep*, that look only on their outsides ! They would not hurt a limb of them for all the world ! Nothing but meer zeal for their good, could make them run such hazards, and venture so much as they do ! What end could they have in following such stray Sheep, but to reduce them to the true sheepfold ? Thus,

if the *Wolves* may be believed, there is no danger to the *Sheep*, but from their *Sherberds*: let them but forsake them, and then see what admirable love, and peace, and unity they would live together in: but the *Apostle* well adds to all this, *deceiving the hearts of the simple*, for none else are capable of being thus deceived, by all their fair pretences and plausible insinuations.

5. The false Teachers were for a more pompous and easie way of Religion, than the true Apostles were: These were for the *purity* and *simplicity* of the *Gospel* of Christ, the other were for joyning the *Jewish Ceremonies* and the *Heathen Customs* together with it; and by this means they hoped with much more ease to gain *Profelites* to them; especially when to this they added a greater liberty in mens lives; so that by these offers, they hoped to gain the vain, the superstitious, and the profaner sort wholly to them. See how St

2 Tim. 3. Paul describes them, *having a form of*
 4, 5. *godliness, but denying the power of it;*
for of this sort are they which creep into
houses, and lead captive silly women laden
with sins, led away with divers lusts.
 These were subjects rightly disposed to
 be

be deceived by them : their folly made them capable, and their lusts very tractable, to such a formal, pompous, easie Religion : It was by this indulgence of men in their sins, that vile Sect of the *Gnosticks* gained so much ground in the beginnings of Christianity. St. *Chrysostom* thinks these words of our Saviour have a particular respect to the foregoing words, *Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* Now these words coming immediately after seem to imply, that these *false Prophets* were for making the gate wider, and the way to Heaven larger than Christ hath done, and such need not fear they shall have many followers, and especially of those who are *farthest* from the Kingdom of Heaven. All the blessedness our Saviour promises, is to the humble and contrite, to the meek and righteous, to the mercifull, pure and peaceable : but if others make easier conditions of blessedness, no wonder if their doctrine be entertained by those who are willing to be happy, but unwilling to leave their sins. As if false Teachers should turn our Saviour's Beatitudes into such as these ; *Blessed are ye, if ye confess your*

Matt. 7. 14.

sins to a Priest, and receive the Sacrament of Penance, for your sins are forgiven. Blessed are ye, if ye vow poverty, and leave the world; for ye shall inherit the earth. Blessed are ye, if ye go in Pilgrimages, and visit the seven Churches (especially in a year of Jubilee, and receive the Pope's benediction) for ye shall be called the Children of God. Blessed are ye, if ye do or suffer evil for the Catholick Churches sake; for great shall be your reward in Heaven. Blessed are they, that howsoever they live, die in St. Francis his habit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. For so Gregory the Ninth saith, that St. Francis obtained this privilege of God, that whosoever had that habit on, could not die ill: and St. Francis adds himself, That whosoever loved his Order in his heart, how great a sinner soever he was, should obtain mercy of God. And are not these much easier terms of blessedness, than those our Saviour lays down? Besides, that which makes the way to Heaven more narrow, is that our Saviour declares, he came not to destroy the Law but to fulfill it: and adds precepts of his own to it: But do not they make the way to Heaven much opener, that teach men to dissolve both

Sacram.
 Privileg.
 S. Francis.
 p. 6.

both the Law and the Precepts of Christ:
 For this is the language of these false
 Teachers, if we bring their doctrine to
 the manner of our Saviour's expressions.
 "Ye have heard, that it hath been said
 "of old, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy*
 "*God, and him only shalt thou serve*; but
 "we say unto you; that ye are to give
 "worship both to Saints and Angels.
 "Ye have heard, that it hath been said
 "by them of old time; *Thou shalt not*
 "*make to thy self any graven Image, nor the*
 "*likeness of any thing,* &c. but we say un-
 "to you, that this Command may be
 "left out among Christians. You have
 "heard that it hath been said of old,
 "*Thou shalt not kill*: but we say unto
 "you, that to murder Princes, blow
 "up Parliaments, destroy Hereticks is
 "lawfull for the good of the Catholick
 "Church. You have heard, that it
 "hath been said of old, *Thou shalt not*
 "*commit Adultery*: but we say unto
 "you, that marriage in a Priest is worse
 "than Fornication. Thus far for
 the Law; now let us see the liberty
 they take as to the precepts of the Go-
 spel. "Ye have heard that it hath been
 "said by Christ, *Drink ye all of this*:
 "but we say unto you that notwith-
 "standing

"standing this precept of Christ, the
 "Laity must not do it. You have
 "heard, that it hath been said by the
 "Apostle, that men ought to *pray with*
 "*understanding*: but we say unto you,
 "that men need not understand what
 "they pray for. Ye have heard that
 "ye have been commanded both by
 "Christ and his Apostles, *to read the*
 "*Scriptures*: but we forbid the people
 "to read the Scriptures, and say, that
 "more hurt than good comes by it.
 Judge now, whether the character of
false Teachers do not belong to them,
 who have found another way, nay, a
 contrary way to Heaven, to that which
 our Saviour directed? And so much for
 the Caution here given, and the Reason
 annexed to it; *Beware of false Prophets,*
for they come to you in Sheep's
cloathing, but inwardly they are ravening
Wolves. I come now,

2. To the Rule laid down by our
 Saviour for the judging of them; *By*
their Fruits ye shall know them. He doth
 not send men to an infallible Judge to
 know the *true* and *false Teachers* from
 each other, but lays down such a *Rule*
 as he supposed might be sufficient to direct
 men in their judgment of them. If

Christ

Christ had ever intended to have left such a *Vicar upon earth*, whose judgment all Christians are bound to follow, he would never have put them to such a needless tryal of mens Doctrines by their Fruits: the short and plain way had been to have said thus, *There will false Teachers arise, but remember that you are to obey and follow the Bishop of Rome; and if you will be saved, I command you, to hold in communion with him.* This had been the fullest and clearest direction in the world; and no doubt, if our *blessed Saviour* had meant any such thing, such was his care of the souls of men, this would have been one of the first and plainest precepts of the Gospel. But so dark and obscure, so remote and impertinent are the proofs brought from *Scripture* for the *Pope's Supremacy*, that I dare say, that *Aristotle's Politicks* do prove it much better than any Text in the Bible: and those I suppose have been of my opinion, who slightly passing over the passages of *Scripture*, have been large in proving, that *Monarchy is the best Government*, and therefore ought to be in the Church. Which argument if it have any force for an *Universal Monarchy* in the Church,

Gregor. de
Majorit. &
Obid.

I should not at all wonder to see the same persons zealous to promote an *Universal Monarchy* in the World too. For if the argument in the *Canon Law* be good, That the Pope is above the Emperour, because God created two great Lights, *the Sun* and *the Moon*: I hope the same reason, which will prove it necessary for the *Sun to rule the day*, will equally hold, that *the Moon should rule the night*. And I shall easily agree, that when it will be thought reasonable for all the Kings and Princes in the world to submit themselves to one *Universal Monarch*, it may be then expedient for all particular Churches, to give up their rights to the Pope. In the mean time we think it most convenient to follow our Saviour's rules, to judge of mens pretences, how great and haughty soever, by the *fruits* they produce. Which *Rule* is not to be understood concerning the *particular actions of men* which have no respect to their *doctrines*; for as *St. Chrysostom* observes, many Hereticks have been men of excellent lives, and so on the contrary; but we are to understand it of those *fruits* which their *doctrines* have a direct influence upon. And therefore this *Rule* hath a particular

cular respect to two things by which we are to examine the fairest pretences: viz. 1. The *design* they tend to. 2. The *means* made use of for the accomplishing this design. If therefore the *design* be quite of another nature from that of the *Gospel*; if the *means* be such as are directly contrary to it, we may from thence justly inferr, that how plausible soever the pretences are, how fine and soft soever the *Sheeps cloathing* be, yet inwardly *they are ravening Wolves*.

I. I begin therefore, with the *design* of their doctrines. Nothing is more easie, than for men to understand the design of Christianity, viz. the exercise of all Christian vertues to fit men for the Kingdom of Heaven: for our Saviour declares, *That his Kingdom is not of this world*; that he came not to meddle with the rights of Princes, or to dispose of Crowns and Dominions; all that he aimed at, was to 'possess men with a firm belief of another world, and by the most powerfull motives to perswade men to repentance, and a sober, righteous, and a godly life. And if they did these things, whatever troubles and difficulties they met with in this world, should be abundantly recompensed

pensed in that to come. This is the main scope and design of the Christian Religion; and the great art of the *false Prophets* lay in this, that they pretended still to own Christianity, (which was their *Sheeps cloathing*) but withal by secret and pernicious mixtures of their own doctrines to undermine and pervert the whole design of it. So St. Paul saith of them, not that they did oppose, but that they did *pervert the Gospel of Christ*.

Gal. 16. 7. *I marvel, saith he, that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ to another Gospel: which yet is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ.* Now I desire, it may be consider'd, whether any thing doth more effectually pervert the design of the Gospel, than the setting up a Kingdom in this world under the pretence of it, that should be paramount to all Princes and Potentates, and to which they owe subjection and obedience? And yet this hath been the open and avowed design of the prevailing Faction in the Church of Rome for the last six hundred years. I do not deny but there were some tendencies to it before, and wise men might easily guess what it would come to, if the

the design came once to be managed by a man of Spirit and courage, as it was by Gregory the Seventh, who in a Council at Rome published his famous Dictates, viz. *That there is but one Name in the World, viz. that of the Pope: that it was in his power to depose Emperors, and absolve Subjects from obedience to their Princes.* Now the grand design breaking out, all other things were contrived and carried on which were thought necessary to accomplish it: and there being two things needfull for the maintenance of such a pretended Monarchy, viz. *sufficient numbers* of men, whose interest should lie in upholding it; and great revenues to support the dignity of it: These two were taken care of with all the art and industry imaginable. For the first it was necessary to disengage them from all civil interests, and yet to preserve their honour and reputation with the people. The former could not be done while the Clergy gave hostages of their fidelity to the Civil Government by the interests of their Families and Children, therefore this Pope did most severely forbid all Clergy-mens marrying; that as the old Roman Soldiers were forbidden marriage while they received

Baron. An.
1076. Sciz.
31.

received pay, lest their domestick interests should abate their courage : so the *Celibate* of the Clergy was strictly enjoyned, to make them more usefull and hearty for this design. But lest the number of these should not be thought sufficient, great swarms of *Monks* and *Friars* were encouraged and dispersed in all Countries, and to make them more faithfull to this interest (because Princes might oblige particular Bishops who might curb and restrain these spiritual *Janizaries*) therefore they were exempted from their jurisdiction, and kept in immediate dependence on the Pope. To give yet further encouragement to both Orders, the Doctrine of *Ecclesiastical Liberty* was set on foot ; not a liberty from the *Law of Moses*, or the power of *Sin*, or the *dominion of Satan*, which is all the *Liberty* the Gospel speaks of ; but an exemption from the power of the Civil Magistrate ; insomuch, that the Popish *Casuits* determine, that *Rebellion in a Clergy man is no Treason, because he is not subject to the civil power.* And

Sa. Apher.
V. Clericus
Ed. Colon.
Conc. Const.
Sess. 19.

this doctrine of Liberty is no invention of the *Jesuits* ; but it is determined by the famous *Councils of Constance, Lateran and Trent, that Lay persons have no*

Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction over Ecclesiastical. But besides this; the Pope hath other tyes upon them; every Bishop is at this day sworn to obey the Pope at his Consecration; all the Regular Clergy are under a Vow of blind obedience to their Superiors, who are more immediately influenced by the Court of Rome. Now such an infinite number of persons being made thus sure to the Papal Interest, it must be so order'd, that these persons may preserve their reputation among the people; to this end, they are told, that they must depend wholly upon the Priesthood for matters of faith and salvation, and it is of mighty concernment to them to have the good will of the Priests, for that upon their good or bad intention depends the making or marring of their Sacraments. But that no designs might be carried on, which they should not understand, never was there such an invention to that purpose, as *Auricular Confession*: and yet that the people may have greater reverence to their Priests, they are told, that they can make their God at any time by pronouncing the Five Words of Consecration. And what cannot they do, (as one of them bravely said) while they have their God in their

*Concil. Lat.
5. Sess. 10.
Conc. Trid.
Sess. 25.
c. 20.
V. Pontific.
Rom. in
Consecr. Ep.*

H

hands,

hands, and their Prince on his knees? And both these doctrines of *Confession* and *Transubstantiation* were defined by the same Pope *Innocent* the Third, a man of the same spirit and undertakings with *Gregory* the Seventh. And lastly, that no supplies should be wanting to support the Grandeur of the *Papal See*, besides the pretended Donations and Concessions of Princes, all arts imaginable were used to drain money out of all Countries in subjection to the Pope, and to empty *it into* the Pope's Treasury. This very Kingdom of ours was a remarkable instance of this, during its Vassallage under the Pope's Tyranny. For an account being taken in *Henry* the Eighth's time, it was found, that in the compass of forty years foregoing, no less a sum than 160000 *l.* was carry'd to *Rome* upon the sole account of Investiture of Bishops, besides the vast summs that were raised by *Peter-pence*, *dispensations* and *Indulgences*, which were a kind of Contribution upon the sins of the People. Thus we see, how the design was laid and managed for a *Univversal Monarchy* in the Church. But some will say, *That the world is grown wiser now.* I heartily wish it were so:

Antiq.
Brit. A. D.
1532.

for nothing would be more prejudicial to the *Papal Interest*, than its being so. But let us not deceive our selves, the pretensions are as high and as great at *Rome* to this *Monarchy* as ever they were. And whatever some vainly distinguish of the *Court and Church of Rome* in this matter, it is certain those of the *Court of Rome* not only assert, but prove it too, that this doctrine hath been the doctrine of the *Roman Church* for six hundred years; and they produce for it besides a great number of Authors, no fewer than ten *Councils*, whereof two are allowed by them to be *general viz.* those of *Lyons* and *Lateran*. But this is not all, but they contend for it not as a probable opinion, but as a thing certain and of faith, and that not barely at *Rome*, but even in *France*. For in the memory of many yet alive, after a hot debate in a general Assembly of the three Estates at *Paris*, the *Pope's Power of deposing Princes* was assented to by all the *Nobility and Clergy* of that *Kingdom*. Some particular persons among them, may and do oppose it of late; but they are *excommunicated at Rome* for doing it; and thereby declared as much as they can be, not to be *members of their Church*,

AD. 1615.

for daring to oppose so Orthodox and Catholick a Doctrine as the Pope's power of deposing Princes. Nay, Cardinal

Harangue fait de la part, de la Chambre Ecclesiastique en celle dutiers Estat. sur l'article du Serment. Par. Monsig. l'Eminentiss. Cardinal du Perron L'An. 1615.

Perron saith in his eloquent Oration to the third Estate at Paris, who opposed this Doctrine. That unless it were approved, it follow'd that the Church of Rome for many Ages hath been the Kingdom of Antichrist, and Synagogue of Sa-

tan: and King James tells us, That the Pope in his Letter of thanks to the Nobility, for complying with this blessed Doctrine, called the Commons or Deputies of the third Estate, Nebulones ex sæce plebis, a pack of Knaves of the very dregs of the people. Very obliging Language from the Head of the Church! When all that the Commons desired, was only to have this opinion condemned, That the Pope hath power to depose Princes, and that killing of Kings is an act meritorious to the purchase of the Crown of Martyrdom: but this by all their instances and arguments, they could never obtain; but the Nobility and Clergy overruled them in it. For the Clergy, King James saith, he did not wonder so much, because they look on themselves as properly

ly

ly Subjects to the Pope, and therefore are bound to advance that Monarchy to which they belong. But for the Nobility, saith he, the King's right arm, to prostitute, and set as it were to sale, the Dignity of their King, as if the arm should give a thrust unto the head; I say, for the Nobility to hold and maintain even in Parliament their King is liable to deposition by any foreign Power or Potentate, may it not pass for one of the strangest Miracles, and rarest Wonders of the World? For that once granted, this consequence is good and necessary; That in case the King once lawfully deposed, shall stand upon the defensive, and hold out for his right, he may then be lawfully murdered. Which consequence is very well understood at Rome, and allowed to be good by the Roman Casuists; and yet the eloquent Cardinal call that Doctrine which makes Princes indeposable by the Pope, A breeder of Schisms, a gate that makes way for all Heresie to enter; and a Doctrine to be held in such detestation, that rather than he and his fellow Bishops will yield to the signing thereof, they will be contented like Martyrs to burn at a stake. Blessed Martyrs the mean while! and fit to be put in the same Calendar with

the *Gunpowder Traitors*, who suffered, as I shall shew presently, on the same principle; methinks they might have chosen a better cause to have died Martyrs for. But surely it must be *an article of faith*, and a main point of their Religion, which makes men *Martyrs* who suffer for it. And such no doubt, it is accounted among them; when the same Cardinal saith, *That it leads men not only to unavoidable Schism, but manifest Heresie to deny it; and that it obliges men to confess, that the Catholick Church hath for many ages perished from the earth; for he confidently avows it, that all parties in the Catholick Church have held it, and the whole French Church, till the time of Calvin; that if this Doctrine be not true, the Pope is so far from being Head of the Church and Vicar of Christ, that he is a Heretick and Antichrist, and all the parts of their Church are the Limbs of Antichrist.* And if they be so, we cannot help it: but think we have great reason to secure our selves against the infection of such pernicious principles both to Christianity and the Civil Government. And what can be more opposite to the design of Christianity, when that requires men

to

to obey even *Infidel* and *Heathen* Governours for conscience sake, this Doctrine makes it lawfull to depose, destroy, and murder Christian Princes for the Pope and the Churches sake? This is the first thing we are to examine *false Teachers* by; viz. the design of their Doctrines. Rom. 13.5.

2. By the means made use of to accomplish this design: If things in themselves evil, repugnant to the principles of humane nature, and those of civil societies, as well as to the precepts of Christianity, are made lawfull only for the carrying on their design; we need not go farther examine them; for *by these fruits we may know them*. There are three things which mainly uphold Civil Societies, *Truth, Obedience, and a care of the good of others*; but if men fall not through any sudden infirmity or surprize, but openly and avowedly justify the lawfulness of *falsehood, treason and cruelty*, when they are intended for the carrying on their design; what could they invent more contrary to the Laws both of God and Man? where-in could they better discover themselves, notwithstanding *their Sheeps cloathing*, to be meer *ravening Wolves*? I. *Falsehood,*

Proceed.
against the
Trait.

End.ata.

Joh.

Resp. ad Ep.

If. Casaub.

c. 8. p. 171.

Proceed.]
against the
Trait.

hood; and that both in their words and dealings. 1. In their words, by asserting the lawfulness of *equivocation* and *mental reservation* in their most solemn Answers: as *Father Garnett*, when the Lords asked him, *Whether he had any conference with Hall?* denied it upon his Soul, and reiterated it with such horrible execrations as wounded their hearts that heard him, and immediately upon Hall's confessing it, he excused himself by the benefit of *equivocation*: which being objected against *Garnett* after his Execution, the Roman Jesuit *Eudæmon Johannes* defends him in it, and saith it is lawfull for a man to swear, and take the Sacrament upon it, when he knows in his conscience, what he saith to be absolutely false, if he doth help himself by a mental reservation. And *Tresham* a little before his death in the Tower subscribed it with his own hand, *That he had not seen Garnett in sixteen years before, when it was evidently proved, and Garnett confessed they had been together but the Summer before; and all that Garnett had to say for him was, that he supposed he meant to equivocate.* Lord! that men going into another world, should think thus grossly to impose upon God

God and men. What was speech intended for, if not that others might understand our meaning by it? Did ever any man tell a lye to himself? Truth in words consists in an entire proposition, and not of one half-spoken and half-concealed? and if it be lawfull thus to abuse mankind, it was to no purpose ever to forbid lying; for any but meer fools may help themselves in their most solemn protestations, by some secret reserve in their own minds: and so this principle makes way for all the lyes or perjuries in the world, if a man thinks that he is not bound to betray himself, or if he judges his own damage will be greater by discovering the truth, than the others damage will be by concealing it. 2. Falshood in *dealings*: and that notwithstanding the most solemn Promises, nay, the *safe conducts of Princes*. For notwithstanding all their shifts and evasions in this matter, no man that regards his safety, will ever put his life into their hands for the sake of the Council of *Constance*. All that they have to say is, that *the Emperour did as much as lay in him to do; but it belonged to the Council to proceed upon Hereticks, and the Emperour could not hinder that.* And what is

is this, but plainly to say, that Princes are to keep *their* words with *Infidels* and *Catholicks*, but they have nothing to do to keep their words with *Hereticks*? And if this be their principle, we must have a care how far we trust them.

2. *Treason.* It is the honour of our *Church of England*, that it asserts the *Rights of Princes* so clearly and fully, without tricks and reservations; and all that mean honestly, love to speak plainly. But how many cases have they in the *Church of Rome*, wherein men are acquitted from their duty from their Princes? If a Toy comes into the Pope's head, or upon some Pique or *Jealousie*, he falls to the censures of the Church, and excommunicates a Prince: what a case is this poor Prince in, as to all those Subjects that think themselves bound to obey the Pope? They may lawfully in their own opinion rise against him, fight with him, assassinate and murder him. And which is very observable, all this while they are not bound to believe the Pope infallible in these censures; so that right or wrong, if a Prince chance to fall under the Pope's censures, we see what a liberty is left to all his creatures to ruin and destroy

destroy their Sovereign? The frequent attempts upon Queen *Elizabeth*, the murder of *Henry* the Third of *France*, after their excommunications by *Pius* the Fifth, and *Sixtus* the Fifth, are sufficient evidences of the danger of Princes in these cases. By which last instance, we see it is not only the case of *Hereſie*, which renders them obnoxious to the *Popes* censures; but particular piques and quarrels; or if the *Pope* chance to think a man unfit to govern, as in the case of *Chilperic* of *France*; or if they detain *Church-Lands* belonging to *Monasteries*, in which case *Becanus* Becan. cont. Angl. p. 127. saith expressly, Kings and Princes are to be excommunicated and deprived: and *Pope Paul* the Fourth was perfectly of this opinion; and declared, *They were in a state of damnation that held them*. But so far some of them, are kind to Princes to say, *That they ought not to be deposed, till they are excommunicated*; and yet *Gregory* the Seventh before excommunication deprived the Emperour *Henry* the Fourth for the damnable *Hereſie*, of defending his own Rights. But since they are liable to these horrible censures upon so many causes, we may see how very ticklish

History of the Council of Trent, l. 5. n. 391.

lish and uncertain the doctrine of *Obedience* must be among them, and that mens being guilty of *Treason* depends upon the Popes pleasure. And methinks herein the case of Princes deserves hugely to be pitied, that when no man thinks it lawfull to cut another man's throat, or put him out of his house and estate, because he is excommunicated; yet if a Prince falls under excommunication, he loses presently his right to the Crown, and his Subjects may take away Crown, Liberty, and Life from him.

3. *Cruelty*. And by this they fully discover themselves to be *ravening Wolves*: when they have lost all the tenderness, and love, and good nature of men or Christians: when no design can be so horrible or bloody, so mischievous and treacherous, so base and cruel, but persons will be found to undertake it, and that under a pretence of *Conscience* and *Religion*. I need not here tell the long and dreadfull stories of the *Roman Inquisition*, the numbers of those in other Countries who have been *butchered* on the account of *Religion*, but the *Fact*, I mean *the Conspiracy*, (for God be thanked it went not farther) which

which we bless God for the discovery and defeating of this day, doth abundantly manifest the *fruits* of those doctrines, which they had sucked in from the *Roman Church*. If only a few desperate persons upon personal provocations had been engaged in so villainous a design, we should have had never the less reason to thank God for our deliverance; but since it doth appear, that those persons who undertook it, pretended nothing in it but *conscience and Religion*, we have not only reason to abhor the undertaking, but the principles which animated them to it.

I know very well what *Sheeps cloathing* hath been of late cast over the most barbarous cruelty of these *ravening Wolves*; and men by their impudence would endeavour to bear us down, *that it was only a project of some few malecontents, drawn in by the subtilty of a crafty Statesman in those days; and that it ought not in justice or honour to be imputed to the principles of their Religion.* Therefore to lay open before you the just and true circumstances of this horrible Conspiracy, I shall proceed upon these three particulars.

*Apology for
Papists.
Reply to
the Answer,
p. 203.
Advocate
for Liberty
of Conscience,
p. 218.*

1. That

1. That the persons engaged in it had no personal provocations to move them to it.

2. That all the motives they had to it were from the principles of their Religion.

3. That the Church of *Rome* hath never since detested the principles upon which they acted; or set any mark of infamy on the Actors in it.

1. That the persons engaged in it had no personal provocations. What injury had *Catesby*, or *Piercy*, or *Tresham*, or *Digby* received from the *King* or *Parliament*, to stir them up above thousands of others to be the great managers of so hellish a Plot? Did not they enjoy their estates and places, and one of them at *Court* too? Why should these men venture lives, estates, honours, families, and all that was dear to them? Were their estates confiscated before; and themselves every hour in danger of having their throats cut? This might make men of high spirits grow desperate. But not the least tittle of all this was pretended, by the most enraged of them: nothing but *Zeal for Religion and the Catholick Cause*, was ever pleaded for them. To which purpose

pose these are remarkable words of King James in his *Speech in Parliament* upon the discovery. *For if these Conspirators, saith he, had only been bankrupt persons, or discontented upon occasion of any disgraces done them, this might have seemed to have been but a work of revenge. But for my own part, as I scarcely ever knew any of them, so cannot they alledge so much as a pretended cause of grief, and the wretch himself in hands doth confess, that there was no cause moving him or them, but Meerly and Only Religion.* And the King himself again avowed it to the whole Christian world, *That the Papists had not before this horrible design, the least colour of any discontent from him: that he had so far suspended penalties, and abated the rigorous execution of Laws against them, to such a degree, as gave great suspicion to his best Subjects, who told him what would be the fruit of all his kindness to them. Nay, he saith, they grew to that height of pride in confidence of his Mildness, as they did directly expect, and assuredly promise to themselves Liberty of Conscience, and equality with his other Subjects in all things: that he had shewn particular Favours to many of them, gave them free access to him, eased them*

K. James's
Works,
p. 501.

K. James's
Works,
p. 253.

them of their payments, set their Priests at liberty, granted a general Pardon to them after conviction. Now after all this, what colour or pretence in the world can there be to say, that only discontent and despair brought these men to it? O, *but it might however be the cunning of a great Minister of State, to draw a few Gentlemen and others into such a Plot.* This I know is suggested and believed by some, who think it a fine thing to talk out of the common road, and to be thought more skilfull in Mysteries of State than other men. But I would fain understand from whence they derive this profound intelligence at such a distance of years. If King *James* may be believed, if the Popish Historians and Apologists at that time may be credited, there was not the least intimation given, either by the *Actors* or *Sufferers*, from abroad or at home of any such thing. Was not the world sufficiently alarm'd at the news of this dangerous and unparalleled Conspiracy? Were not men very inquisitive into all the particulars? and those of the *Church of Rome*, especially the *Jesuits*, concerned in point of honour to wipe off the stain from themselves,

selves, and to cast the *odium* of it on a great *Minister of State*? Were not two of the *Jesuits* who were conscious of the Plot, preferred afterwards at *Rome*? and how many Writings came from thence about it? and yet not one man discovered the least suspicion of any such thing. If they go on in this way without the least shadow of proof to lay the contrivance of this Plot on a *professed Protestant*: for all that I know, by the next age, they may hope to persuade men, that it was a Plot of *Protestants* to blow up a *Popish King* and *Parliament*.

2. That they had all their Motives and Encouragements from the principles of their Religion to undertake such a design. (And *Philostatus* contends, L. 7. Vit. Apol. that the murder of *Domitian* ought rather to be attributed to the doctrines of *Apollonius*, than to the hands of *Stephanus* and *Parthenius*.) For which we are to consider, that they were fully possessed with this as a principle of their Religion, *That it was absolutely in the Pope's power to deprive heretical Princes of their dominions*: which had been rooted in them, especially after that *Pius* the Fifth had fully declared it in

his *Bull* against *Queen Elizabeth*. In her case they made no scruple to destroy her if they could, and thought they should do it with a good conscience. And there are no Villains in the world like those who are Villains out of conscience. But as to the *Queen's* Successor, the Pope had declared nothing; till such time as *Garnett* being *Provincial* of the *Jesuits*, had received two *Breves* from *Rome*, wherein he declared, *That in case they should suspect the Queen's Successor would not be true to their Religion, it was lawfull for them to use their endeavours to keep him from the Crown.*

These *Breves* *Garnett* shews to *Catesby*, who took the rise of his design from hence. And when afterwards in conference *Garnett* desired him to know the *Popes* opinion in it, he replied, *That he needed not ask that, for if it were lawfull to exclude him before he came to the Crown, it was lawfull to take him away when he was in possession of it.* Which argument was so strong, that *Garnett* either had no mind, or was not able to answer it. All the scruple *Catesby* had after this was, *whether it were lawfull to destroy the innocent and guilty together?* which *Garnett* fully resolved him in, so it were

Withdringt.
append. ad
Supplicat.
p. 133.

Proceed.
against the
Traitors.
Garnett's
Tryal.

were for the greater good of the *Church*. Upon these two grounds, as *Widdrington*, a *Roman Catholick* well observes, *Catesby* laid the foundation of his whole Conspiracy. After this, it's evident by manifest proofs, and *Garnett's* own confession under his hand, that he and other *Jesuits* did understand the particulars of the Plot; and *Tesmond* another *Jesuit* and he discoursed the circumstances walking together in *Moor-fields*; and that *not in confession*, as is pretended, for the *Jesuit* did not confess it as a fault, but advised with him about particulars, and asked him, *who should be Protector of the Kingdom after the Plot took effect?* as *Garnett* himself confessed. But suppose it had been *in confession*; why might not *Treason* be discovered as well as *Heresie*? and their *Casuits* acknowledge, that *Heresie* may be revealed. There is only this difference, that *Treason* is only against *Secular Princes*, but *Heresie* against the interest of *their Church*; which is dearer to them than all the *Princes* lives in the World. Yea, so busie were the *Jesuits* in encouraging this Plot, that they not only debated it among themselves; but one of them gave them the Sacrament upon the Oath

of Secrecy, and then absolved them after the discovery; another prayed for good success, another comforted them after it was discovered by the examples of good designs that had wanted success. And must we after all this believe, that only a few discontented Laicks were engaged in it, and that it was nothing at all to their Church? when the Jesuits gave all the encouragement to them in it, in point of conscience: so that it was truly, as well as wittily said of one, That the Jesuits double garment might well be called Charity, because it covered a multitude of sins.

3. But if the Church of Rome give no encouragement to such actions; why hath it not detested the principles upon which it was grounded? Why hath it not removed all suspicion in the minds of Princes and People of giving any countenance to such treasonable designs? But on the contrary, the same doctrines are still avowed, and the persons of the Conspirators honoured. Widdrington saith, That Garnett's name was inserted into the English Martyrology, though he gave it under his hand, that he died for Treason, That his bones were kept for Reliques, and his Image set over Altars,

Widdrington.
son. Appen.
p. 150.

as of a *holy Martyr*? Is this the honour of *Regicides* and *Traitors* in the *Roman Church*? When in the late prosperous Rebellion, the prevailing Faction had proceeded to such a height of Wickedness, as to take away the life of our Gracious Sovereign, how did the *Church* and *Nation* groan and grow impatient till they could vindicate the honour of our Religion and Country! not only by an execution of Justice on the persons of the *Regicides*, but by declaring in *Parliament* against the principles that led to it. What hath there been done like this in the *Court* or *Church* of *Rome*, against the principles or actors of this *Gunpowder Treason*? If it had succeeded, by all that we can see, *Paul* the Fifth might have admired the providence of *God* in it, as much as *Sixtus* the Fifth did in the murder of *Henry* the Third of *France*: and we may guess his mind shrewdly by the *Bulls* he published against the *Oath of Allegiance*, which the *King* was forced for his own security to impose on the *Papists* after this Conspiracy. With what scorn and contempt doth *Bellarmino* treat the *King* in his Writings against him, and tells him in plain terms, *if he would be secure, he*

must give liberty to their Religion? It seems then, their principles are dangerous to Princes where they have it not. What mark of dishonour was there set by their own party on any one of the Conspirators? Two of the *Jesuits* upon their arrival at *Rome*, met with such hard usage, that one was made the *Pope's Pœnitentiary*, the other a *Confessor* in *St. Peter's* at *Rome*. And is not this the way to let the world see, how detestable such persons and practices are to their Church? To conclude all, I challenge those of the *Roman Church* to produce any one solemn Declaration of that Church, (I do not say of Secular Powers or some particular persons, or Councils rejected at *Rome*) whereby they make it unlawfull for the *Pope* to depose Princes, or to absolve Subjects from their Oaths of Allegiance to them. But instead of that, even in this present age of ours, that opinion which makes it unlawfull, hath been condemned at *Rome* by three several *Popes*, *Paul* the Fifth, *Innocent* the Tenth, and *Alexander* the Seventh: and which is more considerable, all three have condemned it with a particular respect to the case of his Majesty's Subjects; and
not

not meerly condemned it as a false opinion, but *as wicked and contrary to faith.* And *is not the world grown wiser now as to these matters?* But if they be not, I hope we may be. And after their frequent Treasons and horrible Conspiracies, and principles never disowned by their Church, have we not reason to entertain suspicion of them, as to their principles of Civil Government, till they give sufficient security, that these pernicious principles have no influence upon them?

But blessed be that God, that hath hitherto defeated the malicious purposes of the inveterate enemies of our Church and Religion: that hath brought to light these works of darkness; and yet continued us in the enjoyment of the benefits of this mighty deliverance to this day. May the same Gracious God go on still to protect our established Religion, against all Foreign Usurpations and Domestick Factions. May our love to it still encrease, and our zeal for its Preservation make us study the best means to preserve it; that neither Divisions among our selves, nor Assaults of our common enemies may be ever able to ruin and destroy it;

Pfal. 124.
6, 7, 8.

that we may still say with the Psalmist,
*Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given
us over as a prey unto their teeth. Our
soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare
of the fowlers; the snare is broken and we
are escaped. Our help is in the Name of
the Lord who made Heaven and Earth.*

S E R.

SERMON III.

Preach'd before the

KING.

February 24. 167³.

HEB. III. 13.

*Lest any of you be hardned through
the deceitfulness of sin.*

WHen the Jewish Christians
had formed themselves into
an established Church, and
were become considerable for their
number, as well as for their zeal and
devotion, their obstinate Brethren
thought it high time for their own se-
curity, at least to weaken and divide
them, if they could not wholly sup-
press and destroy them. For this end,
they made use of different instruments
and means, according to the different
seasons,

Heb. 10.
32, 34.

seasons, and dispositions of men. Sometimes when they had any encouragement, or connivence from the *Roman* Power, they set upon them with rage and fury, *spoiling their goods*, and threatening their lives: But this hard usage did only heighten the courage, and unite the affections of the more zealous Christians. Sometimes they suggested to them the mighty veneration, which their whole Nation always had for *Moses* and the *Law*, and what an infinite scandal and dishonour it would be to them all, to have that Law, which was delivered by Angels, confirmed by Miracles, established by Prophets, admired by the Gentiles, and had continued among them for so many Ages, now of a sudden to be laid aside for the sake of a new institution, that expressed no more regard to them than to any other Nation in the World. And so great was the love which the *Jews* had to their own Country and Religion, such an opinion was generally received among them of the peculiar favour of God towards them, that they who could not be shocked by persecution, were in danger of being overcome by flattery. From hence the *Author* of this *Epistle* makes

it

it his business to shew the excellency of *Christ* above *Moses*, and of his *institution* above that of the *Law*, in respect of the *Priesthood* and *Sacrifices*, and the *benefits* which come by them; and that although this *new and living way* were but lately discovered, yet it was that which was always designed by God, foreseen by the Patriarchs, foretold by the Prophets, and longed for by good men as the *Consolation of Israel*: and it could be no more disparagement to *Moses* and the *Prophets* to yield to the *Glories* of the Kingdom of the *Messias*, than it is to the Stars not to be seen when the light of the Sun appears. But besides these, there were some among them capable of being wrought upon by other kind of arguments, such I mean, who out of a sudden transport of zeal, and being convinced by the miraculous operations of the *Holy Ghost*, had declared themselves *Christians*, but yet retained a secret love to their sins, and the pleasures of this World: these were the Persons whom the *Apostle*, not without reason, expresses the greatest jealousy of, as in danger of Apostasy: and therefore in many places of this *Epistle*, he represents to them the dreadful

full consequences of such an Apostasie,
 Heb. 6. 6. for it was no less than *crucifying the Son
 of God afresh, and putting him to an open
 shame; it was counting the blood of the
 Covenant wherewith they were sanctified
 an unholy thing, and doing despight unto
 the spirit of Grace; nay it was not on-
 ly crucifying, but treading under foot the
 Son of God; and therefore he bids them
 consider, what punishment such persons
 would deserve at the hands of God into
 which they must fall, and what hopes
 there could be of pardon for those who
 so openly rejected the only means of
 obtaining it; For if they did herein sin
 wilfully after they had received the know-
 ledge of the truth, there remaineth no more
 sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearfull look-
 ing for of judgment, and fiery indignati-
 on which shall devour the Adversaries.*

But he not only sets before them the sad
 effects of Apostasie, but as one that
 loved their souls, and designed to pre-
 vent their ruin, he gives them the best
 advice and counsel against it: He
 knew well enough, it was not the dissa-
 tisfaction of mens reason, which was
 the ground of their infidelity: but, as
 mens more open designs are governed
 by such springs which are least discove-
 red;

red; so, whatever these warping Christians might pretend, as to zeal for the Law, and their ancient Religion, the bottom of all was a principle of infidelity, not arising from want of sufficient reason to convince them, but from a close and secret love of sin which made them willing to quarrel with what ever was so repugnant to it, as the doctrine of Christ. To this end, he puts them in mind of the case of their *Fore-fathers* in the Wilderness, who wanted no arguments to convince them of God's Goodness and Providence; yet nothing would satisfy them, but they were still murmuring and complaining, till at last God swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest. *Heb. 3. 11.*

“And since you all
 “acknowledge, they had reason enough
 “to be satisfied, but out of an obstinate
 “and stubborn humour *hardned their*
 “*hearts in the day of temptation in the*
 “*Wilderness; take heed Brethren, saith*
 “the Apostle, *lest there be in any of*
 “*you such an evil heart of unbelief in de-*
 “*parting from the living God; and do*
 “not look upon this advice as vain and
 “needless to you that are called the *be-*
 “*lieving Jews*, but you have cause to be
 “very watchfull over one another, e-
 “specially

“specially in this tempting Age, ex-
“horting one another daily while it is
“called to day, lest any of you be hardened
“through the deceitfulness of sin. As
though he had said to them, “You
“who now glory in the name of Be-
“lievers, and are hitherto as forward as
“any in the profession of Christianity,
“do not think your selves to be above
“the need of any helps to confirm your
“faith, and to arm you against the as-
“saults of temptations, for your very
“security may betray you; but consi-
“der *the sin that doth so easily beset you*
“on every side, the various artifices it
“makes use of to deceive men, and
“when it hath once gotten admission,
“how strangely it bewitches and infat-
“uates the minds of men, how un-
“willing they are to be convinced of
“their sins, how much more unwilling
“to part with them, and how naturally
“the love of sin brings men to infideli-
“ty, and then you will see how great
“reason there is, why you should be
“exhorting one another daily while it is
“called to day, lest any of you be hardened
“through the deceitfulness of sin.

In which words, are these three things considerable.

1. The *danger* they are in of *being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*, who have the most powerfull motives and engagements against it.

2. The *manner* whereby *sin* doth prevail upon men to harden them, *through the deceitfulness of sin*.

3. The *care* that all Christians ought to have to prevent *being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*: *Lest any of you, &c.*

1. The *danger* men are in of *being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*, though they have the most powerfull motives and engagements against it. For never any Persons had greater arguments against returning to the practice of sin, than these to whom this *Epistle* was written. They had embraced among the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, *the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands* (for the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost) *and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.* And what can we suppose to have greater force and efficacy to restrain men from sin,

fin, than what is contained in these fundamentals of Christianity? But we shall find that no *Motives* have ever been great enough to restrain those from fin, who have secretly loved it, and only sought pretences for the practice of it.

Such is the frame and condition of humane nature considered in it self, so great are the advantages of reason and consideration for the government of our actions, so much stronger are the natural motives to vertue than to vice, that they who look no farther, would expect to find the world much better than it is. For why should we suppose the generality of mankind to betray so much folly, as to act unreasonably and against the common interest of their own kind? as all those do, that yield to the temptations of sin: For if we set aside the consideration of a Divine Law, *to sin* is nothing else but to act foolishly and inconsiderately. But on the other side, if men first look into the practice of the world, and there observe the strange prevalency of Vice, and how willing men are to defend as well as to commit it; they would be apt to imagine that either there is no such thing as Reason
among

among men, or that it hath very little influence upon their actions; and that the talk of Vertue was first found out by some great enemy to the Felicity of Mankind. Such different apprehensions would men have from the different ways of beholding the Picture of Humane nature; either as it is in its own frame, or as it is to be seen in the World. They who have with the greatest judgment and care searched into the nature and first principles of humane Societies, have all agreed that the chief end and design of men in joyning together was, for the mutual benefit and advantage of each other; and that in order to this, certain Laws of *Justice, Equity, Mercy, Truth, Gratitude, Temperance*, as well as of *Subjection to Government*, ought to be inviolably observed by men. And since these things have the universal consent of mankind to be for their general good, how comes it to pass, that men being joyned in these Societies for such ends, make so little Conscience of the practice of them? How come so many to live as it were in open defiance to these Fundamental Laws of Nature? How come others, only to make use of the pretence of vertue to deceive,

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and

and of honesty and integrity to cover the deepest dissimulation? If they be not good, why are they pretended? If they are good, why are they not practised? So that whether we consider mankind in it self, or in Society; we find the *Motives* to vertue to be much more weighty, and considerable than those to sin; and yet that the practice of men is directly contrary.

But it may be said, *that all this might happen in the world for want of wit and education to polish and improve the natural Faculties of mens minds, and to direct and encourage the practice of vertue.* I wish the world had not so many instances, that men of the greatest wit have not been men of the best Morals; but if wit, and education, and Philosophy had been the most effectual means to reclaim men from sin, where should we have looked more for the flourishing of vertue, than in Greece and Rome? And yet in those times, when all the accomplishments of *wit* were at the highest in those places, the manners of men were sunk into the greatest filth of debauchery. It would make one astonished to read the admirable discourses of their *Philosophers*, and to consider the
strange

strange height that *eloquence* and *wit* were arrived to among their *Orators* and *Poets*; and then to compare the account given of the manners of the *Gentile World*, not only by their own *Satyrists* but by the *Apostles* in their several *Epistles*: What a monstrous *Catalogue* of sins do we meet with in the *first Chapter* to the *Romans*? of sins of so deep a dye, and of so horrid a nature, and such an *Inventory* of all sorts of *Wickedness*, that one might imagine the *Apostle* had been rather describing some vision of *Hell*, than the seat of the *Roman Empire*. To the same purpose he speaks of the *Corinthians* and *Ephesians*, who thought themselves behind none of the *Greeks* of that Age in the breeding then most in *Vogue*; but we need not instance in particulars, when *St. Peter* calls it in general *the will of the Gentiles, to live in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings and banquetings, as well as abominable Idolatries*; and *St. John* in short saith, *the whole world lyeth in wickedness*.

Rom. i. 26,
27, 28, 29,
30, 31, 32.

1 Cor. 6. 10.
Ephes. 4.
17, 18.

1 Pet. 4. 3.

1 Joh. 5. 19.

It might be worth our while to consider how so universal a degeneracy of manners should happen in those ages, when men pretended more to *Wit* and

Learning, than they had done in any time before. And for this, it were very unreasonable to assign any Cause that were equally common to all other Ages, such as the corruption of humane nature; which, how great soever it be, is the same at all times; neither do I think it reasonable to lay it wholly on the bad examples of the teachers of virtue, knowing how malicious the world of men are in endeavouring to make those who seem to be better, to be as bad as themselves: but there are some peculiar reasons for it, and I wish they had been only proper to those times as,

1. Separating *Religion* and *Morality* from each other. When their *Religion* was placed in some solemn Rites, and pompous Ceremonies, and costly Sacrifices; but all the matters of *Morality* were confined to their *Schools*, there to be enquired after by those that had leisure and curiosity for them. As though God were more concerned for the colour, and age, and pomp of their Sacrifices, for the gestures and shews of their devotion; than for the purity of their hearts, the sincerity of their minds, or the holiness of their lives. When once

the people had swallowed that pernicious principle, that Morality was no part of their religion, they had no great regard to the good or evil of their actions, as long as a little charge, and four looks, and going to their Temples at certain times were thought sufficient to expiate their sins. And they were much more encouraged in Wickedness, when the Gods they worshipped were represented on the stage as acting all manner of villainies: and no doubt, they thought it a great comfort to them in their debaucheries, that their Gods were as *good fellows* as themselves. And what could all the precepts of *Philosophers*, or sayings of *wise men* signifie to those who were so far from looking on vertue as any necessary part of their Religion, that they thought those fit to be worshipped for Gods, whom they never believed to have been good men?

2. When they had thus render'd vertue unnecessary, by making it no part of their Religion, the next thing was to make it appear *ridiculous*; which was a certain way to make *Fools* out of love with it; who do not consider, what is fit to be laughed at, but what is so. When *Socrates* at *Athens* undertook with

many sharp and cutting *Ironies* to reprove the vices of his Age; and with a great deal of Wit and Reason to persuade men to the sober practice of *Vertue*, the licentious people knew not what to do with him, for they were not able to withstand the force of his arguments; at last *Aristophanes* (having a *Comical Wit*, whereby he was able to make any thing seem ridiculous although he knew very well the *Wisdom* and *Learning* of *Socrates*; yet) to please and humour the people, he brings him upon the Stage, and represents his grave instructions after such a manner, as turn'd all into a matter of laughter to the people of *Athens*: which did more mischief to the reputation of *Vertue* among them, than the taking away his life did. For, his dying convinced the people he was in good earnest, and brought a great veneration to his memory; whereas the other exposed him only to scorn and contempt; and the people were made judges whether it were with cause or no: who besides their ignorance and want of judgment, were too much Parties to be Judges. This is the method which men take, when they set their *wits* against *Vertue* and

and *Goodness*; they know it is impossible to argue men out of it; but it is very easie by ridiculous postures, and mimical gestures, and profane similitudes, to put so grave and modest a thing as *virtue* is out of Countenance, among those who are sure to laugh on the other side. I do not think such things can signifie any thing to wise men; but when was the world made up of such? and therefore it signifies very much to the mischief of those who have not the *courage* to love *despised virtue*; nor to defend a Cause that is *laughed down*. And to these I may now add,

3. The *bad examples* of others, especially of those to whom it belonged to *teach and encourage Virtue* above others, No man will pretend, that it is ground enough for him to do a thing ineerly because he sees another do it; yet in all Ages men have seen and complained that the power of examples hath outdone that of Laws. Some that think themselves more subtle than others, question whether those mean what they say, who speak one thing and do another; and therefore they will do what they think the others mean; which were a good plea, if their actions were

better than their words. Others think, that all discourses of vertue, and honesty, and true honour, are meer matter of talk for men to entertain some idle hours with, and that men are universally agreed in nothing but in speaking well and doing ill. These look on vertue as a kind of *Phoenix*, a thing often talked of, and believed by some, but never seen by any: but such find all things so very bad at home, that out of charity to themselves, they believe the whole World to be like them. Others have so much natural modesty and sense of shame, that they have not the courage to commit a great wickedness, unless they were hardened to it by the example of greater sinners before them. But the most common reason of the prevalency of example is, that men find in themselves a strong propensity and inclination to do evil, and are willing to meet with such a pretence for committing it, that they do but as others do; and therefore I cannot think that bare example were enough to corrupt the World if there were not some antecedent inclination in humane nature to the practice of evil. For since there is less reason to follow bad examples than good,

good, why should one prevail more than the other in the world, if there were nothing but the bare example to move? But that inclination being considered, we may easily give an account of the ill consequence which the bad examples of those who are to direct and encourage others in virtue, must needs be of to the rest of mankind *Xenophon* Xen. ep. ad Æsch. was not without reason so much displeased, when he saw some of the best of *Socrates* his Disciples, make their *Court* to *Dionysius* in *Sicily*; knowing how inconsistent the reputation of virtue is, with the very *suspicion* of *Flattery*: and that nothing makes great men more suspicious of *virtue*, than when they see *Philosophers* become *Flatterers*, and carrying on the restless designs of ambition under the pretence of teaching the art of contentment to others. It was this which made the very name of them become so odious at *Rome*, that even virtue it self was hated for their sakes: so that the very teachers of virtue contributed to the increase of vice. Especially, when by their endless disputes and wranglings about words and terms of art, they made the people suspect they did but play prizes before them; and only

only pretended to quarrel, but were well enough agreed to cheat and deceive them. Upon such grounds as these, all the *Motives* to *Virtue* contained in the *Writings* and *Instructions* of *Philosophers* lost their due force and efficacy on the minds of the people, who were rather more *hardned in their sins* by these disadvantages which attended the means that were used to reclaim them from the practice of them.

But when all other *motives* proved ineffectual by these disadvantages, what could be more reasonably expected, than that the *motives* of the *Gospel* should prevail with men, being of so great weight in themselves, and recommended with so much advantage to the World, by the examples of those who delivered them? The great arguments of Christianity against the practice of sin are not drawn from any uncertain *Topicks*, or nice and curious speculations; but from the influence mens good or evil actions in this World will have upon their happiness or misery in another. And what concerns another state is revealed with much more clearness, and confirmed by stronger evidence, and enforced by more moving
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considerations, than ever it was before among the best and wisest of the Gentiles. The doctrine of Christianity is plain and peremptory in this matter, *that God will render to every man according to his Works: and that the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.* And however prone men are to be deceived with vain words, yet let them look to themselves, *God will not be mocked,* (however men may be) *for because of these things the wrath of God will come upon the Children of disobedience.* No Sacrifices, no prayers, no penances, no vows and promises will keep off this wrath of God without a hearty repentance and timely reformation. Never any Religion or Institution in the World made it so much its business to keep men from doing evil, and to perswade them to do good, as the Christian doth. The Apostles thought it the greatest contradiction to their profession, for any men to be called Christians, and to live in the practice of their former sins, *Let the time past of your life suffice you,* saith St. Peter, *to have wrought the will of the Gentiles,* i. e. that time past when you were no Christians.

To

Rom. 2. 6.
1. 18.

Gal. 6. 7.

Eph. 5. 6.

1 Pet. 4. 3.

To be a Christian then was all one as of a loose, profane, dissolute person to become sober, religious, exact in his conversation. *To put on Christ*, was
 Rom. 13. but another phrase, *for making no provi-*
 14. *sion for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof;*
 Eph. 4.20, *To learn Christ*, was all one as to put off
 21, 24. *as concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitfull lusts; and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.* Those were the blessed days of Christianity, when it was no hard matter to understand what it was to be a Christian; when the niceties of disputes, and the subtle artifices of men of corrupt minds had not yet debauched the notion of Christianity, to reconcile it with the lusts of men. To be a Christian then, was not to be versed in the subtilties of the Schools; or to be able to swallow contradictions without chewing them; or to be as fierce and earnest for every doubtfull opinion and uncertain custom, as if the substance of Christianity were like *Epicurus* his World made up of a great number of very small and restless Atoms. To be a Christian, was not to fight for the Faith, but to live by it;
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not to quarrel for good Works, but to practise them; in short, to be a Christian was *to depart from iniquity and to do good*, to be meek and humble, and patient, and peaceable towards all men; to be charitable and kind; to be sober and *temperate in all things*, to be holy, sincere, and innocent in his actions towards God and men. This is the true *Idea* of a Christian, and not a meer *Idea*; but such as every one that owns himself to be a Christian is bound by the most Sacred vow of *Christianity* in *Baptism* to be like; so that, if either the consideration of their own eternal welfare, or the nature, design, or honour of Christianity, or their own most solemn engagements can restrain men from the practice of sin, we see that those who are Christians, are under the most powerfull *motives* and *engagements* against it.

But yet such there have been (I wish I could not say such there are) who have broken through all these things, and *have been hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*. One might have thought, if any persons had been out of this danger, they had been such as the *Apostle* makes this exhortation to; who

who had seen the *miraculous operations of the holy Ghost* for confirming the *Doctrine and Motives of Christianity*; nay who
 Heb. 6. 4, 5. had themselves been *made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and had tasted of this Heavenly gift, and of the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come*: Who had testified their repentance for their former sins in the most publick and solemn manner, and had entred into the most Sacred Vow of Baptism, never to return more to the practice of it: who had done this in the heat of persecution, which they endured with courage and rejoycing; yet after all these things, the Apostle expresses a more than ordinary jealousy lest any of them *should fall away, and their hearts be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*. When *Critias and Alcibiades* had forsaken the paths of vertue, which they seemed very forward in, while they continued under the instructions of *Socrates, Xenophon* saith, *There were some that contended that they never had any vertue at all, because those who once had it could never lose it: but for his part, he saith, he was by no means satisfied with their opinion: for as men by discontinuing bodily exercises make them-*

^a Ἀπομνην.
 βιβλ. α'. p.
 416.

themselves incapable of doing those things which they were most expert in before ; so men by the neglect of improving their minds in vertue ; and giving way to the temptations of honour and pleasure (which was the case of Critias and Alcibiades) may by degrees lose the force of all the motives to vertue, and consequently the vertue it self. It is agreed by all men who understand any thing in these matters, that even Grace, although it be the effect of a divine power on the minds of men, is of it self capable of being lost ; the great dispute is, whether it may be lost past all recovery ? But as we have no more reason to set any bounds to the Grace of God in mens Recovery, than as to their first Repentance ; so we ought to consider, that there is such a falling away, mentioned by the Apostle, of those who have been once enlightened, Heb. 6. 4, 6. of which, he saith, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance : and that Scripture deals with all persons in its exhortations, and admonitions, and threatnings, as if they were capable of falling to the utmost degree: and to suppose that thing impossible to be done, which the gravest counsels, and the most vehement perswasions are used to keep

keep men from the doing of, is to make a severe reflection on the wisdom of them that give them. And the *Apostle* here leaves none of them out; but bids the most *forward believers* beware of an *evil heart of unbelief*; and those who had been most softned by repentance, take heed of *being hardned through the deceitfulness of sin*. So that we see, how powerfull soever the *motives to Vertue* are; how great soever the *engagements against Sin*; yet the *Apostle* thought it needfull to give them warning against the *deceitfulness of sin*.

2. But what kind of *deceitfulness* is this in sin, that the best and wisest men are so much caution'd against it? What irresistible *charms* doth it use to draw men into its snares? with what infusion doth it so far intoxicate mankind to make them dote upon it, against the convictions of Reason, and dictates of Conscience, and the power of perswasion, and the most solemn and repeated Vows and Promises against it? nay to make men pursue it to such a degree, as rather to be damned for it than forsake it? If we were to consider this only by Reason, we could imagine nothing less than that *sin* at one time or other hath

hath laid such a mighty obligation on mankind, that rather than part with it, the greater part of men, out of meer gratitude, would be content to suffer for ever with it : or, that it is a thing so absolutely necessary to the comfort of mens lives, that they cannot live one good day without it : Whereas in truth, the whole race of mankind hath suffer'd extremely and continually by it : and it is so far from being necessary to the comfort of mens lives, that the greatest troubles and vexations of life have risen from it ; and men may enjoy far greater satisfaction, and more real contentment ; and more noble, and solid, and lasting pleasures if they did utterly renounce and forsake it. But this still makes the difficulty so much the greater, how it should so far bewitch and infatuate the far greatest part of mankind ; and of those who know how dearly they must suffer for it in another World ? And yet to assail this difficulty, we have only two Accounts to give how sin comes to deceive mankind so generally, so fatally ; and those are 1. By subtle insinuations ; 2. By false reasonings.

I. *By subtle insinuations.* The great Masters of pleading in ancient times

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have told us, that there are some Cases which are never to be managed by plain and downright reasonings, (because they are too weak to bear that method of handling) and then they bid men have a care in their beginning, of coming close to the business; but they must fetch a compass about, and by secret arts and degrees insinuate themselves into the good opinion of the Judges before they are aware of it. This is the very method which is made use of *by the deceitfulness of Sin*; it dares not stand the examination of any close reasoning, for all its artifices would presently be discover'd then; but it makes use of these arts of insinuation.

1. It endeavours to raise a good opinion of it self by false colours and representations of things.
2. When it hath done that, it draws men on by degrees to the practice of it.
3. When men are engaged in the practice of sin, then it represents to them how much it is their own interest to defend it, and so brings them from *the counsel of the ungodly, and the way of sinners, to the seat of the scornfull.*

1. It endeavours to raise a good opinion of it self by *false colours* and representations

entations of things. The first precept of insinuation is to remove prejudice; for while that continues, all that can be said will be of no force. While men look on sin as vile, and loathsome; as mean and unworthy of a man; as inconsistent with the peace and contentment of their minds, so long temptations are easily resisted: all arts must therefore be used to make it appear with all the address and flattery which is most apt to entice a poor deluded sinner. Then, the fetters and shackles which it brings to enslave men with, must be looked on and admired as ornaments; its most sordid and filthy pleasures must be thought great and manly; and a little present honour and advantage appear more valuable than an eternal state of Happiness and Glory. These are things we should think it very hard for men to be deceived with; and yet every day we find they are so; and which is far more, they are ready to take it very ill of those who go about to undeceive them. In other cases, if a man tells another, that he is like to be deceived with a false and counterfeit Jewel instead of a true one; or to buy a bad Title to an Estate instead of a good

one, he thinks himself very much obliged to him for his fidelity and kindness; only in the case of man's beloved sins, although they will prove the greatest cheats in the World to him, yet he cannot well endure to be told so; but his blood is apt to fire and enflame him into a passion against him that doth it; and although it be meant with the greatest innocency and kindness, it is ready to be interpreted to be only the effect of malice and ill will. For now sin hath insinuated it self so far into him, that no one can be thought a friend to the person, who is not so to his sins; and they are then come to that height of friendship and community of interests, to have common friends and common enemies. Now all the discourses of the freedom, and pleasure, and satisfaction of a man's mind in the practice of vertue appear very dull and insipid things; and fit only for *Learned Fools* or *Philosophers* to talk of.

Nothing deserves the name of *Liberty* with them, but a power of doing what they please. What nonsense and contradiction doth it seem to them for those to be accounted free, who are under any bonds or restraints? No matter

to them, whether they be from God or Nature, from Reason or Conscience, as long as they are restraints, they look on them as inconsistent with their notion of liberty. And next to those who threaten men with punishments in another World for what they do amiss in this, they account those the greatest Fools that first found out the distinction of good and evil, and just and unjust in the actions of men, "What Fools (say they) were they to fasten dishonourable and reproachfull names on some of the most pleasant and beneficial actions of life? For thus a man is debarred that noble and manly Vice of Drunkenness for fear of losing the reputation of Sobriety; and the extravagancies of Lust, for fear of doing injury to his Neighbour's Bed; and supposing a man hath never so much advantages in his hands to enrich himself by defrauding another, yet he must not do it, because although an estate be in the keeping of a Fool, yet another must not be a Knave to get it from him. Thus do these miserable Slaves to Vice pity the weakness of those who have so little wit (as they think) not to understand the Liberty

they enjoy : But thus do mad men pity the dulness of those that are in their wits, that do not sing, and rant, and despise the World, as they do: and fancy themselves to be Kings and Princes, while they are tyed fast in their Chains, and lie in Straw. And upon such grounds as these, the most rude and barbarous *Indians* did better understand the liberty of mankind, than the most civilized Nations. For all civility is a debarring men of some part of this natural liberty, *i. e.* of those things which men have a power to do; and upon this ground all ancient Law-givers and Wise men, who by degrees brought several Nations to order and government, and to live by Laws, ought to be hated as the greatest Tyrants and Usurpers upon the liberties of mankind: and the natural consequence of this would be the overthrow of all Laws, and Order, and Government in the World. But if there must be some restraints upon men, then we are to consider what restraints are just and reasonable, within whose bounds we are to contain our selves; and whatever tends to the dishonour of God, to the injury of others, or to our own destruction, it is all the reason in the

the World we should abstain from. And if men would but do this, they would be kept from the practice of sin: And so this imaginary notion of a boundless liberty will appear to be only one of the false colours that sin puts upon evil actions, on purpose to tempt men to the commission of them.

But there is another Poison which more subtilly and dangerously insinuates it self into the hearts of men, and by which sin gets the possession there, and that is the love of pleasure; I do not mean the pleasure of the mind, or the pleasure of a good conscience, for there is no danger in these; but it is the love of sensual pleasure which is most apt to ensnare men in the practice of sin. It is under this representation chiefly, that sin deceives, betrays, entangles, bewitches, destroys the souls of men: It is this which fills the imagination, and darkens the understanding with filthy steams and vapours, and hurries a man on with the impetuous violence of passions, without considering the mischievous consequence which attends it, either as to his honour in this World, or his salvation in another. This danger which attends the pleasures of sin, was well

Perzoes
Proleg. 3 c.
10. ad Spe-
cimen. Sapi-
ent. vet. In-
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represented in one of the Eastern Parables, of a man violently pursued by Wild Beasts to the top of a Precipice, where there was a Tree growing on the side of a great lake, and at the foot of it a prodigious Serpent lying ready to devour him; the man being in this astonishment gets up on the first branch of the tree he could reach; but he was no sooner there, but his horror increased at the apprehension of his danger on every side of him; and that which added the most to his consternation, was, that the very branch on which he stood was almost eaten off; while he was in this terrible fright, he looks up to the top of the tree, and there sees some wild boney trickling down the body of the tree, which he was so taken with, and so pleased with the sweetness of it, that he forgets his danger, till of a sudden the branch breaks, and down he drops into the lake without recovery. This is the true representation of the pleasures of sin, which men are so much entertained with, that they never consider the hazard they run, and scarce think of their danger, till they drop into that state of misery from whence there is no redemption.

But besides these soft and voluptuous sinners, (who are easily deceived and hardly

hardly drawn out of the snares they fall into) there are others of a more busie, restless, and designing temper, and to these sin appears under another shape to deceive them, with all the advantages of external Splendor and Greatness. And thus they who possibly might escape the baits of pleasure, are carried away by the more plausible temptations of Riches and Honour. It is supposed by some, that when the Devil tempted Christ with the offers of *the Kingdoms of this world; if he would fall down and worship him;* he did not know who he was, but had a mind to try him by the most probable way of discovering what was within him: But surely the Devil thought him some extraordinary person, or else he would never have made so large an offer at first, *viz. of no less than all the Kingdoms of the World,* whereas very much less than one of these hath served to corrupt and debauch the minds of many who have been great pretenders to Piety and Vertue. It was indeed somewhat a hard condition the Devil joyned with his offer, *to fall down and worship him,* because he then designed not only a Victory but a Triumph; but with others he conceals

Mat 4 8,9.

conceals the condition and draws them on by degrees, still rising higher and higher in his temptations, thereby feeding and enlarging their desires; till the love of this World hath gotten such an entire possession of their hearts, that they scarce ever in good earnest think of another till their souls are passing into it. And then it may be, they sadly reflect on their own folly, in that they have preferred the deluding scenes and pompous shews of worldly greatness, before the compleat and endless felicity of another life. But it very often happens, that it is not so long, as till their leaving this World, that men come to understand the restless folly of ambition. For the things of this World are like *Epicurus* his *Atoms*, always moving and jostling one against another; and one man's ambition serves to supplant another, and they who cannot raise themselves may yet help to ruine others; and oftentimes those very designs by which they most hoped to advance themselves, prove the occasion of their fall and destruction. The *Mahometans* have a story to this purpose; *In the time of Jesus, three men in a journey happened to find a Treasure; but being hungry,*
they

Warn. Prov
Perfic. p. 33.

they sent one of their number to buy provisions; he consults how he might get this Treasure to himself, and for that end resolves to poison their meat; the other two agreed to share it between them, and to kill the third as soon as he returned, which they did, and themselves soon after died of the poisoned meat. Jesus passing by with his disciples, said, This is the condition of this world! see what the love of it hath brought these men to! Wo be to him that looks for any other usage from it. This is the first way whereby sin doth insinuate into the minds of them; viz. by false colours and representations of things.

2. But when sin hath so far insinuated it self to bring men to a better opinion of it, it doth not presently hurry them on to the greatest height of wickedness; but leads them gently and by easie steps and degrees, lest they should start back presently with the fright of some dreadfull sin. Which will appear, if we consider how one comes to be corrupted by sin that hath had the advantage of a modest and vertuous education: if those who design to debauch him speak out at first in plain words what they aim at, a sudden horror seizes upon him at the apprehension of it,

it, and it may be he hates their company for ever after. But there is so much a sense of shame left in humane nature, that men dare not tempt others to sin, at least at first, in plain terms; and the same temptation which being represented one way would affright, appearing with greater art and dissimulation may easily prevail. And sin is a thing, that men hate to be forced, but too much love to be cheated into the practice of it. How doth a young sinner struggle with himself, and would if it were possible get out of the noise of his own Conscience, when he hath offered force and violence to it! He is very uneasy to himself, and wisheth a thousand times he had never committed the sin, rather than to feel such horror and disquiet in his mind, upon the sense of it. But if this doth not make him presently repent, and resolve never to be guilty again of the same folly, (as in all reason it ought to do) then by time and company he wears off the impression of his guilt, and the next occasion of sinning makes him forget the wounds of his Conscience, and the smart he endured before; and the fresh temptation revives the sense of his former pleasure, and then

then he is able to withstand no longer; and thus by repeating the same acts, by degrees he becomes a very hopefull sinner, and the reports of his Conscience are but like that of sounds at a greater distance; they lessen still more and more, till at last they cannot be heard at all. And when he hath thus mastered his Conscience, as to any one sin, which at first he was fearfull of committing, and hath found such an *Ice* upon his Conscience as will bear him, he goes on still farther and farther, till nothing be too hard for him. He that at first started and trembled at the hearing of an horrid oath, now can hear whole volleys of them discharged without shrinking; and can bear his part in that hellish *Concert*: and he that was so hardly brought to be wicked himself, may in a little time (as some men are strange proficientes in wickedness) tempt and encourage others to the practice of it.

3. And when men are arrived to an habitual continuance in sin, then for their present ease and security, they cast about for any ways to defend it. For whatever is become of Conscience, they may have such a sense of reputation left, that they would not be thought

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Fools, and be contemned and despised by others. But although it be impossible for such to avoid scorn and contempt among all those who have any true regard to Vertue or Honour, yet they will endeavour rather to defend themselves in doing ill than recover their reputation by repentance. And because it would puzzle the wits of the most subtle and concerned persons to find out pretences and excuses for some kinds of sins; therefore the easiest way is to represent all the World as alike bad, although not alike cunning; and although it may be not in the same way, yet in something as ill in it self, but more agreeable to their Age, temper, and condition of life. Thus the greatest sinners love to herd themselves in a croud, and think it some poor defence for their sins, that they would have others believed to be as bad as they: as though a man were in the less danger by the Plague, because it is a general Contagion. But if it happen that some persons in the World should have any reputation for vertue among them, then all the weaknesses, and indiscretions of such, are sure to be enquired after, that so what is accounted vertue, may be thought

thought only natural founness of temper, or want of wit to be otherwise. But if any such should be found in a miscarriage, what Joy and Triumph doth this make? what load of circumstances and aggravations do they lay upon them; as though one single miscarriage of such persons were to weigh down a thousand enormities of theirs. And because it is impossible to defend their extravagant courses by *Reason*, the only way left for them is to make *Satirical Invectives* against *Reason*; as though it were the most uncertain, foolish and (I had almost said) *unreasonable* thing in the World: and yet they pretend to shew it in arguing against it: but it is pity such had not their wish, *to have been Beasts rather than men*, (if any men can make such a wish that have it not already) that they might have been less capable of doing mischief among mankind; by representing all the excellencies of humane nature, which are *Reason*, and *Vertue*, and *Religion*, but as more grave and solemn fopperies. But how hard are such men put to defend their vices, that cannot do it, without trampling under foot the most noble perfections of their own nature!

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These however are the more ingenious sort of sinners, that yield *Reason* and *Religion* to be of *Virtue's* side; but there are others that make use of some shallow pretences of *Reason* to excuse themselves in their sins: which is the second way whereby sin deceives men; *viz.*

2. By *false Reasonings*: and those taken either, 1. From their Present Impunity: 2. Or from their Future Repentance.

1. From their *present Impunity* in sinning, men are apt to deceive themselves into a continuance in it. This is the account the Wise man hath long since given of mens being hardned in sin; *Eccl. 8. 11. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily; therefore the hearts of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.* It seems somewhat hard to understand the consequence, why men should grow more desperately wicked, because God gives them a space to repent? Is it necessary that if God doth punish at all, he must do it presently? that would seem to be rage and fury, or a necessity of nature, and not justice. Cannot judgment be duly executed, unless the Judge break open the Prison doors, and torment the Malefactor in his

his chains? Why may not God respite the punishment of sinners, when he pleases, to another state, since he hath declared *that he hath appointed a day* Acts 17 31. *wherein he will judge the World in righteousness?* What incongruity is there in this to any principle of reason or justice? Will not this time of God's patience, be a sufficient vindication of his lenity and goodness in order to the drawing men to repentance? And will not the day of his future judgment be a full vindication of his justice? Will not the insupportable horrors of a miserable eternity discover far more God's abhorrence of sin, than present sufferings in this life, which, the greater they are, the less they continue? But all this false way of reasoning ariseth from that gross piece of self-flattery that such do imagine God to be like themselves; *i. e.* as cruel and revengefull as they are: and they presently think, if any persons did offend them at the rate that sinners are said to offend God, and they had so much power in their hands to punish them as he has, without any fear of revenge upon themselves, they would be sure to dispatch them presently; but because they see God doth it not,

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therefore they conclude that all the talk of God's anger and hatred against sin is without ground: and from hence they take encouragement to sin. So the Psalmist saith in God's name, *These things thou didst and I kept silence*; and they presently took his *silence* for consent; for it follows, and *thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thy self*: but the Psalmist adds, how ill he took this at mens hands, and that he would one day make them know the difference between the forbearance of sinners, and the love of their sins; *but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thee*. And therefore he bids them be better advised, and *consider this while they forget God, lest he tear them in pieces, and there be none to deliver*.

Psalm 50. 21.
v. 22.

2. Men are hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, from the hopes of their future repentance. For that is one of the great cheats of sin, that every one thinks he can repent and shake off his sins when he hath a mind to do it. Sin doth not lie like a heavy weight upon their backs, so that they feel the load of it; and therefore they think it is easily removed, if they would set themselves to it. Most of those that believe

lieve a God and a judgment to come, and yet continue in sin, do it upon this presumption, that one time or other, they shall leave their sins, and change the course of their lives before they go out of this world. They have not only thoughts of repentance, but general purposes of doing the acts of it at one time or other; but that time is not come, and God knows whether it ever will or no. For sin entices them and draws them on still; and when any motions towards repentance come into their minds, that presently suggests, *It is time enough yet; why so much haste? there will be trouble enough in it when you must do it, what need you bring it so fast upon you? Are not you likely to hold out a great many years yet? what pity it is to lose so much of the pleasure of life, while you are capable of enjoying it? There is old Age coming, and when you will be good for nothing else, then will be time enough to grow wise and to repent.* But O foolish sinner, who hath bewitched thee to hearken to such unreasonable suggestions as these are! For

3. In the last place, it ought to be our present, our constant, our greatest care to prevent being *hardned by the*

deceitfulness of sin. For to this end, it is not enough to consider of it at one time or other in our lives, but we must be *exhorting one another daily, while it is called to day, lest any of us be hardened through the witchcraft and deceitfulness of sin:* And if it be so much the duty of others to shew that regard to one anothers souls; how much more doth it become us to do it, who expect to be called to an account at the great day for the discharge of our trust in this matter? It is a dreadfull passage we read of in the *Prophet Ezekiel*, and enough to make our ears to tingle at the repeating it, *When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man thou shalt surely die, if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand.*

Ezek 33.8.

We would fain believe this to have been some particular and extraordinary commission given to the Prophet by God himself, which doth not concern us; for what will become of us, if not only our own faults (which God knows are too many) but other mens shall be charged upon us? when either through neglect, or flattery, or fear of displeasing, or for any mean and unworthy ends, we

betray

betray our trust, and instead of preventing prove the occasion of mens being to much *hardned through the deceitfulness of sin*. But although we neither pretend to be *Prophets*, nor *Apostles*, yet it is our Office to take care of the *Souls* of men, and can we discharge that, as we ought to do, if we do not with all faithfulness warn men of the danger they run into *through the deceitfulness of sin*? It were happy for us if we could say, *that all the Lord's people are holy*; for then we should have nothing to do, but to praise and commend their Vertues, which were an easie and a delightfull task: but what pleasure is it to rake into the sores, or to reprove the Vices of a degenerate age? to be thought troublesome and impertinent, if we do our duty; and men of no conscience, if we do it not? But our work is neither to libel our Auditors, nor to flatter them; neither to represent them as better, nor worse than they are; nor to charge them with more guilt than their own consciences do charge them with: but our business is, to beseech and exhort them by the mercies of God, by the sufferings of Christ, by the love and tenderness they have for their im-

mortal souls, that they *would to day, while it is called to day, take heed lest they be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* And that will appear to be very reasonable on these considerations.

1. That none are out of the danger of it, while they live in this tempting World. What need have we to take care of being deceived by that, which hath been too hard for the *best*, the *wisest*, and the *greatest* of men? Man in his best state, even that of Innocency, was deceived by the insinuations of sin: when there was no matter within for the temptation to work upon, no reason suggested that could move a common understanding, no interest or advantage that could sway him; no other moving cause appears to us of that fatal Apostasie of *Adam*, but either the imagination of some unknown pleasure, or the bare curiosity of trying an experiment what the effects would be of tasting the *forbidden fruit*. And ever since so general hath the corruption of mankind been, so successfull have the artifices and deceits of sin been in the World, that the best of men have not wholly escaped them; but have some-

sometimes fallen in those very Graces which have been most remarkable in them, as *Abraham* in his trust in God, *Moses* in his meekness, *Job* in his patience, *Peter* in his zeal for Christ. What cause then have others to look to themselves!

If wisdom and experience would have secured men, we should have thought, of all men in the World, *Solomon* the least in danger of being deceived by the insinuations of sin, who had given such excellent cautions against those very snares he fell into himself; and that to such a degree, that his case is left disputable to this day, whether he ever recovered by repentance or no. What numbers are there upon record of those mighty men, who have made the earth to tremble at the noise of their Armies; who have led Kings in chains after their Triumphal Chariots, and have been served by those whom others have adored; yet have, notwithstanding all this, been enslaved themselves by some mean lust, and destroyed by the power of an effeminate passion? What can be strong enough to resist those charms, which neither innocency, nor wisdom, nor power are sufficient security against?

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Nothing,

Nothing, but the *Grace of God*, and continual care of our selves.

2. The less men suspect their danger, the more cause they have to be afraid of it. None are more fatally deceived by sin, than those who apprehend no danger in it, or think they can escape it when they please. How strangely infatuated are those through *the deceitfulness of sin*, who think with themselves, that after they have spent their lives in sin, they shall make God amends by a few dying groans, and such a repentance as can have *no amendment of life*? Most men, who are the greatest slaves to their sins, are so much deceived by them, as to think they have them wholly at their command, and can when they please cast them off: and such imaginations keep them faster in subjection to them. For if they did apprehend themselves under such slavery, as really they are, they would grow weary and impatient of the yolk; whereas now because they are not forced to commit their sins, they suppose they can with ease forsake them. But none are such incurable Fools, as they that think themselves Wise; and none are so miserably deceived, as they that think themselves

too cunning for their sins. If it be so easie to shake off your sins, remember that your condemnation will be so much more just, if you do it not; for God required no hard thing for you to do: and if it be so easie, why is it not hitherto done? Why do you mock God so often, and pretend every year to repent, and yet are every year as bad, if not worse than other? Why are not *the fruits of repentance* seen in the amendment of life for one year, or a month, or one bare week? Is it not worth while to do so little for him, that hath done so much for you? Methinks, common ingenuity might prevail with men, at least to let God have some part of their lives entire to himself, without interfering with the Devil. But therein lies a great part of the *deceitfulness of sin*, that it falls out here, as in some malignant Diseases, men seldom understand their danger, till they are almost past recovery.

3. None are so likely to be hardened in sin, as those who delay and put off their repentance. For the very putting it off is a sign that sin hath a greater power, than the convictions of Conscience:

science: for why should men ever intend to repent, if they did not think it necessary? and if they think it necessary and yet do it not, it is plain there is something within them stronger than Conscience, which keeps them from it. So that he that intends to repent, and yet lives in sin, hath that aggravation of sin above others, that he sins against his Conscience all that time. Tell me then; O thou subtle sinner, that hopest to be too hard for God and for sin too, by enjoying thy sins as long as thou canst, and then repenting at last, to escape the vengeance of God: dost thou in good earnest intend ever to repent or no? If thou dost not, never deceive thy self; God will not accept these pretences and promises instead of real repentance. If thou dost intend it sincerely, what makes thee to intend it? is it not, that thou art convinced it is much better to be done than not, but canst not find it in thy heart to do it yet? Thou knowest all this while it were much better to leave thy sins, than to live in them, it were far better to be sober, and temperate, and pious, and devout, than to be debauched and profane; and yet

yet for all this, thou dost not repent, but goest on in the same course. Consider then, that this very circumstance deeply aggravates every sin that is committed after it. For it is not a bare neglect of repentance. which thou are guilty of, but a contempt of God and Goodness; it is not only not repenting, but it is an obstinate and wilfull resolution of sinning: for there is no *medium* between living in sin and forsaking of it; and nothing deserves the name of Repentance, that is short of that. And if thou art so wilfull and unreasonable now, as notwithstanding thy resolutions to repent, to live still in thy sins, how canst thou ever hope to repent at last when thy heart will be so much more hardned by continuance in sin?

4. Lastly, Consider the sad condition of those who are hardned through the deceitfulness of sin. They are said in Scripture to be *past feeling*, and to be given over to a reprobate mind, i. e. to have lost all sense of their danger, and of the ill condition they are in; they despise all means of instruction, and scorn all those who would do them good, and who mean them no other

Eph. 4. 19.
Rom. 1. 28.

other injury but to perswade them to be happy. With what disdain and contempt do those proud and lofty sinners, who are once arrived at this height of wickedness, look down upon all those, who endeavour by *Reason* and *Scripture* to convince them of their sins! As though it were not possible for any thing to make men seem more ridiculous to them, than to see them concerned to plead the cause of Vertue and Religion. "To what purpose is all this about Repentance? why should not men be let alone to do as they think fit? for let them preach their hearts out, men will do as they please. This is the language of those who are already hardened in their sins; but God forbid, it should be so of any here present; who make it our prayer to God *to be delivered from hardness of heart, and contempt of his word and commandments.* And we have great reason so to do; for there is no judgment short of hell, like to the being given up to a *reprobate sense*: for all the most weighty arguments and most forcible perswasions are to such but like showers falling upon a Rock, that make some noise and slide off

off again, but make no impression or entrance into them. *God Almighty* give us all his *Grace* to understand our danger and to repent in time, that *none* of us be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

S E R.

SERMON IV.

Preached on the

FAST-DAY,

A T

St. Margaret's Westminster.

Novemb. 13. 1678.

1 Sam. XII. 24, 25.

Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your King.

IT hath been well observed by some, that those who look at a distance upon humane affairs are apt to think that the good or bad success of them

them depends wholly upon the Wisdom and Conduct of those who manage them; others who look nearer into them and discern the many intervening and unforeseen accidents which often alter and disappoint the Counsels of men, are ready to attribute the events of things rather to Chance than Wisdom: but those who have made the deepest search and the strictest enquiry, have most firmly believed a Divine Providence which over-rules all the Counsels and Affairs of men; and sometimes blasts the most probable designs, sometimes prospers the most unlikely attempts, to let us see that though *there be many devices in mens hearts, yet the Counsel of the Lord that shall stand.* We live in an Age not over prone to admire and take notice of any remarkable instances of Divine Providence either in our preservation from dangers or deliverances out of them; for so great is the security of some men, that they are unwilling to apprehend any danger till they fall into it, and if they escape will hardly believe they were ever in it; and such is the concernment of others, to baffle all evidences of truth wherein their own guilt is involved, that they

all

Psal. 73. 17.

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Prov. 19. 12.

all agree in robbing God of the honour of his Mercy, and our selves of the comfort of his Protection. But blessed be that God who hath hitherto defeated all the secret, and subtle, and cruel designs of his and our Churches enemies; and hath given us the liberty and opportunity of this day to meet together to implore the continuance of his favour and mercy towards us in the preservation of his Majesty's person; for in praying for him, we pray for our selves, since our own welfare doth so much depend upon His.

When we look back upon the *History* of this *Church* ever since the *Reformation* of it, we may observe such a wonderfull *series* of Divine Providence going along with it, that we have the less reason to be discouraged with present difficulties, or disheartned with the fears of future dangers. What struggles did it meet with in the Birth? And although it were therein like *Jacob* who took hold of the heel of his Brother, and at last obtained the blessing; yet the Romish party got the start like *Esau*, and came forth all red and hairy, full of blood and cruelty; and the old Dragon cast out of his mouth a Flood of

Fire

Gen. 25.

25.

Fire to destroy our *Church* before it could attain to its full growth and maturity. But after it not only survived these flames, but enjoyed a firm establishment under the care and conduct of a wise and cautious Government, what restless endeavours, what secret plots, what horrid conspiracies, what foreign attempts, what domestick treasons were carried on during the Reign of *Queen Elizabeth*? And yet, which is very considerable, while she openly and heartily owned the *Protestant Cause*, it pleased God to deliver her out of all her dangers, and to give her a long and a prosperous Reign, when two of her Neighbour Princes were assassinated for not being zealous enough in the *Popish Cause* though they professed to own and maintain it. And it is but a very little time since you met together in this place to celebrate the memory of a mighty deliverance which both *King* and *Kingdom*, and together with them our *Church* received from that never to be forgotten conspiracy of the *Gunpowder Treason* in her Successor's Reign. May we not then take up *St. Paul's* argument, and say, *Who hath delivered us from so great death, and doth deliver, in whom we*

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2 Cor 1:10.

trust that he will yet deliver us ?

Especially if we do not fail in the performance of that duty which God expects from us in order to our own preservation, which is delivered by Samuel to the people of Israel, in the words of the Text :

Only fear the Lord and serve him in truth with all your heart, for consider how great things he hath done for you.

But if they would not hearken to this wise Counsel, but go on in their sins, he tells them what the fatal consequence would be, not to themselves only, but to their King too :

But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be destroyed, both ye and your King.

Which advice will appear to deserve our serious consideration this day, if we either regard (1.) The Person who gave it. (2.) The Occasion of giving it. (3.) The Matter contained in it.

1. The Person who gave this Counsel to the People, Samuel; a Person of great Wisdom, and long experience in Government, and therefore very able to judge concerning the proper causes of a Nation's Prosperity and Ruine. The People had enjoyed a long and uninterrupted tranquillity while they follow-

ed

ed his directions. They had before been miserably harassed by the inroads of the *Philistins*, discomfited in several battels, and at last the *Ark of God* itself taken by their enemies, and their leaders destroyed, at which sad news, *Eli, who had judged Israel forty years*, 1 Sam. 4. 11. fell backwards and so ended his days: while they were under the sense of their present miseries, *Samuel* puts them into the most hopefull way for their deliverance, which was by a reformation of Religion among them, by returning to the Lord with all their hearts, and putting away their strange gods, and preparing their hearts unto the Lord and serving him only; and then, saith he, *He will deliver you out of the hands of the Philistins*. The miseries they felt, and the dangers they feared made them own the true Religion with more than usual courage: *Then the Children of Israel did put away Baalim and Astaroth, and served the Lord only*. But besides this, *Samuel* appoints a publick and solemn Feast of all *Israel* at *Mizpeh*; *And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the Lord. And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water and poured it out before* v. 4. v. 5. v. 6.

N 2 the

Mas. in Jos.
18. 21.

Druf. in
Jud. 20.

the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord. Mizpeh, a City in the confines of Judah and Benjamin, as *Masius* and others observe, was the place where the States of Israel were wont to be assembled together upon any great and important occasion; where there was a place on purpose for them to meet in, and an Altar, and House of Prayer for the publick Worship of God: and therefore it is said, *Judg. 20. 1. The Children of Israel gathered together from one end of the Land to the other, unto the Lord in Mizpeh; and there the chiefs of all the Tribes of Israel presented themselves in the Assembly of the People of God.* And therefore *Samuel* chuseth this as the fittest place for them to fast and pray, and confess their sins in, and to implore the Mercy of God to the Nation. We do not read in Scripture of any more publick and solemn Fast of the People of Israel kept with greater signs of true humiliation than this at Mizpeh was; for the pouring out of water was used among them either to represent their own desperate condition without God's help, that they were as water spilt upon the ground; or the greatness of their sorrow

for

for their sins, and the floods of tears which they shed for them. And to let mankind see what influence a general and serious Fasting and Humiliation hath upon the welfare of a Nation, we find from the day of this *Fast* at *Mizpeh* the affairs of *Israel* began to turn for the better. For the *Philistins* thought they had an advantage against the *Israelites* by this general meeting, and hoped to surprize them while they kept their *Fast* in *Mizpeh*; and made such an in-
1 Sam. 7. 7.
 cursion upon them, as put them into a great consternation; and they came trembling to *Samuel*, praying him that he would not cease to cry unto the Lord
v. 8.
their God for them, that he would save them out of the hand of the Philistins. *Samuel* prays, the Lord hears, *Israel* marches out of *Mizpeh*, pursues the
v. 9.
Philistins and smites them; and *Samuel* sets up a stone of remembrance, and
v. 11.
 calls it *Eben Ezer*, saying, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.* Yea from hence
v. 12.
 forward did God help them, for it follows, *so the Philistins were subdued, and they came no more into the Coast of Israel; and the hand of the Lord was against the*
v. 13.
Philistins all the days of Samuel. Never any People had greater reason to be plea-

fed with a Governour than they had with *Samuel*; who managed their affairs with so much wisdom and piety, with so much faithfulness and integrity, with so much courage and constancy, with so much care and industry, with so much success and prosperity. But people are apt to surfeit upon too much ease and plenty, and to grow wanton with abundance of peace; they began to be weary of *Samuel's* Government, and secretly to wish for a change. And when mens discontents grow ripe, there seldom wants a plausible occasion to vent them: *Samuel was grown old* and could not go about *from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh*, as he was wont to do, but fixed at his house in *Ramah*, and placed his Sons in *Beersheba*; these not following their Father's steps, were soon accused of male-administration; and nothing would now satisfy the discontented Elders of *Israel*, but *Samuel* himself must be discharged of his Government; For they gathered themselves together, and came to *Samuel* in *Ramah*; and said to him, Behold thou art old, and thy Sons walk not in thy ways; this was their pretence, but their design was to alter the Govern-

v. 16.

; Sam. 8. 2.

v. 3.

v. 4.

v. 5.

Government. Their plenty and prosperity had made them fond of the *Pomp* and *Grandeur* of their Neighbour Nations, and whatever it cost them, they were resolved to have a *King to judge them like all the Nations*. Samuel tells them, what inconveniencies that more *absolute form of Government* of the Neighbour Nations would bring among them, as *Josephus* shews; all which signified nothing to them; for it is said, *Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel, and said, Nay, but we will have a King over us, that we also may be like all the Nations*. It was not the Monarchical way of Government that was so displeasing to God or Samuel; for their Government was of that *Form* already, God himself being their *King*, and appointing such *Vicegerents* as he thought fit to manage their affairs under him. So God answered Samuel, *They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them*. Not, as though Kingly Government were inconsistent with God's Sovereignty over his people; for by him *Kings Reign*; and they are *his Ministers to us for good*, and that Government is the most agreeable to his own, and to

From v.
10. to v.
19.

Jos. An. l.
6. c. 4.
v. 19, 20.

Ch. 12. 13.

8. 7.

the primitive institution of Government among men. But wherein then lay this great sin of the *Israelites in asking a King*, when God himself had provided by his Law, that they should have a *King* when they were settled in their own Land? And yet we find the *Israelites* at last confess, *We have added unto all our sins this evil to ask us a King*. Their great fault was, that they were so impetuous and violent in their desires, that they would not wait for *Samuel's* decease whom *God* had raised up among them, and whose Government had been so great a blessing to them; and therefore *God* looked on it as *a rejecting him more than Samuel*, since he had appointed him; and they had no reason to lay him aside for his Sons faults, but they made use of that only as a colour for their own self-willed humour and affectation of being like to other *Nations*. However *God* commands *Samuel* to yield to them; and he appoints another meeting at *Mizpeh*, for this purpose; where the Person was chosen by lot; and at his solemn inauguration at *Gilgal*, *Samuel* makes that speech unto all *Israel* contained in this 12th Chapter; whereof the words of the *Text* are the conclusion;

Deut. 17.

14

12. 19.

8. 7.

10. 17.

11. 15.

on; which make these words the more considerable,

2. In regard of the *Occasion* of them; being delivered by *Samuel* at so great a solemnity in which he delivers up the *Government* into the hands of their *King*,

(1.) With a great protestation of his own integrity, with an appeal to their own Consciences concerning it, and they freely give a large testimony of it. 12. 3.

(2.) He upbraids them with their ingratitude towards *God* time after time; that they were never contented or pleased with his Laws or the Governours he raised up amongst them; and now at last upon a sudden fright concerning *Nabash* the *King* of *Ammon*, they were resolved they would have a *King*; and behold, saith he, *the Lord hath set a King over you.* (3.) Notwithstanding their sin in so unreasonableness a demand, yet he tells them they might be happy under his Government if they did sincerely keep to their *established Religion* and *obey the Laws of God.* This he delivers, From v. 6. to 14.

(1.) More Generally, *verf. 14, 15.*
If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him,
and obey his voice, and not rebell against
the Commandment of the Lord, then shall
both

both ye and also the King that reigneth over you, continue following the Lord your God; i. e. God will protect and defend you. But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebell against the Commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your Fathers. But this being a matter of the greatest consequence to them, whereon the welfare of the Nation did depend, he delivers it,

v. 18, 19.
v. 20, 21.

v. 23.

(2.) More *Emphatically*; after the Thunder and Rain had affrightened and softned their hearts; and they came praying to *Samuel* and confessing their sin to him; then he counsels them *not to fear*, if they *did not forsake God*; and for his part, however they had disoblighd him, he would not only continue to pray for them, but give them the best advice and directions he could: *But I will teach you the good and the right way*. And then these words immediately follow, *Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart, &c.*

3. These words are most considerable for the *Matter* contained in them; which lies in these three particulars.

(1.) The influence which continuance in sin hath upon a Kingdom's ruin:

in: but if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your King.

(2.) The best means for the welfare and preservation of it, viz. maintaining and practising the true Religion; Only fear the Lord and serve him in truth with all your heart.

(3.) The great argument and encouragement here given for the doing it; for consider how great things he hath done for you.

The first of these will be the main subject of my present Discourse, viz. The influence which continuance in sin hath upon a Kingdom's ruin. If we believe Moses and the Prophets, we cannot question the truth of this concerning the People of Israel; for this is the main scope and design of their doctrine. Moses assured them, that all the strength, and force, and combination of their enemies should do them no prejudice as long as they obey'd the *Laws of God*; but if they would not do his Commandments, but despise his *Statutes* and abhor his *Judgments*, all the care and policy they could use would not be able to keep off the most dismal judgments which ever befell a Nation, I will even appoint over you terror, consumption and

Lev. 26.
from v. 3.
to 14.
v. 15.

v. 16.

the

- the burning Ague; that shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart; and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and you shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you, and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. And if you will not for all this hearken unto me, then will I punish you seven times more for your sins, so he proceeds to the end of the Chapter, still rising higher and higher, according to the greatness of their provocations. And to the same purpose he speaks throughout Deut. 28. promising great Blessings to their Nation upon obedience, and horrible Curses, such as would make ones ears tingle to hear them, upon their refractoriness and disobedience, The*
- Deut, 28. *Lord shall send thee cursing, vexation and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do; untill thou be destroyed, and untill thou perish quickly, because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me. To the same purpose all the Prophets speak, only applying this general doctrine to the circumstances of their own times. If ye be*
- Isa. i. 19, *willing and obedient, saith Isaiah, ye shall*
20. *eat the good of the Land; but if ye refuse*
and

and rebell, ye shall be destroyed with the sword, the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. When the Prophet Jeremiah saw dreadfull calamities coming upon his people, he cries out, *Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart.* Ezekiel tells them there was no hope to escape being destroyed, but by speedy and sincere Repentance, *Repent and turn your selves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin.* Jer. 4. 18. Ezek. 18. 30.

But here a material question may be asked, whether this connection between their *doing wickedly*, and *being consumed* were not by vertue of that political Covenant between God and the people of Israel which was peculiar to themselves? and how far it may be just and reasonable to argue concerning the case of other Nations, with whom God hath entred into no such Covenant, as he did with them?

To make this clear, and to bring it nearer to our own case, I shall proceed in this method.

1. To shew, that God doth exercise a particular providence with respect to the state and condition of Kingdoms and Nations.

2. That

2. That according to the *usual method* of *providence* their condition is better or worse as the *People* are.

3. That there are some *circumstances* of sinning, which do very much portend and hasten a *Peoples* ruin.

1. That God doth exercise a *particular providence* with a respect to the *state* and *condition* of *Nations*, i. e. as they are united into several and distinct bodies, which are capable as such of being happy or miserable. For since mankind's entring into *society* is both necessary and advantageous to them; and God doth not barely permit and approve, but dispose and incline men to it; and hath given them *Laws* to govern themselves by, with respect to *society*; it is but reasonable to suppose that God should call men to an account in that capacity; and to distribute rewards and punishments according to the nature of their actions; which must either be done in this world, or it cannot be done at all; for all those bonds are dissolved by death, and men shall not answer for their sins by *Kingdoms* and *Nations* in another world, *but every man shall give an account of himself unto God.* Either therefore those *societies*

as such shall go wholly unpunished, or they must suffer according to them in this world; and therefore here the case is very different from that of particular Persons. We say, and with a great deal of reason, that it is no disparagement to the Justice of God's Providence for good men to suffer, or for wicked men to escape punishment in this Life, because the great day of recompence is to come, wherein there will be a *Revelation of the righteous judgment of God*: But that will not hold as to *Nations*, who shall not suffer in communities then as they have sinned here: and therefore it is more reasonable to suppose the rewards and punishments of such shall be in this life according to the measure and proportion of their sins. And of this we have sufficient evidence in Scripture, upon these accounts.

(1.) Because it charges *guilt* upon *Nations* as well as upon particular *Persons*. And in case of *uncertain murder*, *If one be found slain in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, and it be not known who hath slain him: the Elders of the next City* were not only to protest, their own *innocency*; but to use this Prayer,
Be

Deut. 21. 1.

v. 7.

v. 8. *Be mercifull, O Lord, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israels charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them, so shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you.*

v. 9. Here we see the guilt of innocent blood goes farther than the bare shedders of it, it lies upon the Nation till it be expiated; and the Jews say, the soul of a person innocently murder'd hovers up and down the earth crying for vengeance, till the guilty persons be found out and punished, and then it ascends above to its place of rest. The guilt of innocent blood is indeed a crying sin; it cries loud unto Heaven for vengeance, and nothing stops its voice but the execution of it. And where that is not done, it leaves a guilt upon the Land; for God himself hath said it, *Blood defileth the Land; and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.* This sin we see, is of such a malignant nature, that it infects the Land where it is committed, and lies upon it till it be expiated. But there are other sins which contract a National guilt, when the Authority of a Nation, either gives

Numb. 35.

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too

too much countenance and encouragement to the practice of them, or does not take that care it ought to do to suppress and punish them. When men daily and insolently break the *Laws* of God, and bid as it were defiance both to them and to the *Laws* of men; when wickedness spreads like a *leprosie*, and infects the whole body; when vices become so notorious that they are a reproach and a by-word to Neighbour Nations; these are the signs and tokens of *National guilt*.

(1.) Because the *Scripture* tells us of a certain *Measure* to which the *sins* of a Nation do rise before they are ripe for punishment. This was the reason given why *Abraham's Children* must stay to the fourth *Generation* before they come to the possession of the promised *Land*, for the iniquity of the *Amorites* is not yet full. Where it is plain that God doth consider Nations as distinct bodies, the measure of whose sins is taken after another manner than that of particular persons; but when once that measure is compleated, ruin and destruction is unavoidable; or at least, some signal and extraordinary judgments falling upon them as the punishment of their iniquities.

Gen. 15. 16.

quities. Men may ask why the *Canaanites* in *Joshua's* time were dealt with so severely, that nothing but utter extirpation would satisfy the Justice of God against them? But God prevents that objection by letting *Abraham* know how much patience and long-suffering he used towards them, waiting till the fourth *Generation*; and when their iniquities still encreased, and every Age added to the guilt of the foregoing, the burden grew too heavy for them to bear it any longer, and therefore they must sink under the weight of it. So our Saviour saith to the Jews in his time,

Matth. 23. *Fill ye up then the measure of your Fathers.* Not as though God did punish any Age beyond the desert of its own sins; but when the measure of their sins is filled up, God doth no longer forbear to punish them; and that seldom happens, but when the sins of that time do exceed those of the foregoing *Generations*; as it was in the case of the *Jews* when their *City* and *Temple* were destroyed.

(3.) Because it attributes the great *Revolutions* of *Government* to a particular *Providence* of God, *God is the Judge*, or the supreme Arbitrator of the affairs
of

of the world, *he pulleth down one and setteth up another.* Which holds with respect to *Nations* as well as particular persons. Which doth not sound any right of Dominion (as some fancied till the argument from *Providence* was returned with greater force upon themselves) but it shews that when God pleases to make use of *Persons* or *Nations* as the *Scourges* in his hand to punish a *People* with, he gives them success above their hopes or expectations: but that *success* gives them no *right*. And of this the *Psalmist* speaks when he adds, *For in the hand of the Lord there is a Cup and the Wine is red; it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same; but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them.* It is called by *Isaiah*, *the Cup of Fury*, II. 51. 17. and *the Cup of Trembling*, which God gives to *Nations* destined to ruin: which makes them like people intoxicated and deprived of that apprehension of danger, of that judgment and consideration to prevent it, which at other times they have. When a *Nation* is near some dreadfull calamity, as a just punishment of its sins; *God* takes away the wisdom of the *Wise*, and the understanding of

Psal. 75. 7.

v. 9.

II. 51. 17.

the Prudent, and the resolution of the men of courage, that they all stand amazed and confounded, not knowing how to give or take advice; but they are full of fears, and rather apt to quarrel with one another than to consult the general good. This was just the *state of Egypt* when God did purpose to execute his *Justice* upon it.

- (1.) First, their courage failed them, II. 19. 1, 3. *And the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it; and the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof. In that day shall Egypt be like unto women; and it shall be afraid and fear, because of the shaking of the hand of the Lord of Hosts, which he shaketh over it.* It is a very ill sign when men want the spirit and vigour they were wont to have; when they are daunted at the apprehension of every danger, and rather meanly seek to save themselves by base arts and sordid compliances, than to promote the common welfare. It is folly and stupidity not to apprehend danger when there is cause for it, and to take the best care to prevent it; but it is a fatal symptom upon a *Nation* when their *hearts fail them for fear*, that they dare not do the duty which they owe to God, to their

their *King*, and to their *Country*. God forbid that any should exceed the bounds of their duty to prevent their fears, but when men want resolution to do that, they are in a lost condition.

(2.) Their *Counsels* were divided and insatuated: *And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians. The Princes of Zoan are Fools, the Counsel of the wise Councillors of Pharaoh is become brutish; they have also seduced Egypt, even they that are the stay of the Tribes thereof. The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof, and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a reeling man staggereth in his vomit, i. e. they know not what to fix upon, all their Counsels being so uncertain, and the best taking no effect. But after all their consultations, they advance not one step forward, but fall back just to the same case they were in before; every one blaming another for want of success in their designs. This is the deplorable state of a People when ruin and desolation is near them.*

But on the other side, when *God* raises up a *Nation* to be a Scourge to other *Nations*, he inspires them with a new spirit and courage, unites their coun-

V. 2.

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fels, removes their difficulties or carries them easily through them, and by a concurrence of some happy circumstances gives them strange success beyond all their hopes and expectations. Look over all the mighty Revolutions which have hapned in the *Kingdoms* and *Empires* of the *World*, and the more ye search and consider and compare things together, the greater truth you will find in this observation. When God designed to punish the *Eastern Nations* for their transgressions, then the *Babylonian Monarchy* rose so fast and spread so far, that nothing was able to stand before it. The combinations of the

Jer. 27. 3. *Kings* of *Judah*, and *Edom*, and *Moab*, and *Tyre*, and *Sidon*, and *Egypt* were

Jud. 16. 9. but like *the Withs which the Philistins bound Sampson with, which he brake in sunder as a thread of Tow is broken when it toucheth the fire.* *Judah* drinks first

of the *Cup*, and she trembles and falls, and is carried into captivity; then follow, as God had foretold by his *Prophets*, the desolations of *Tyre*, of *Egypt*, of *Put* and *Lud*, i. e. of *Libya* and *Æthiopia*; and at last the *Cup* passes round,

Jer. 25. from 18. to 26.
Ezek. 24. 2, &c.
Nah 3. 8, 9.
Zeph. 2. 13. and *Nineveh's* turn comes to drink deep of this *Cup* of *Fury*, and she was laid

wast

wast for returning to her sins after Repentance.

And when the sins of *Babylon* called for vengeance, God raised up *Cyrus*, and called him by his *Name*, long before he was born, and brought the fierce Nations of the *East* to submit themselves to him: and when *Babylon* was most secure, full of Wine and Jollity at an anniversary feast, he led *Cyrus* into the *City* by a way they dreamed not of, and all the plagues which the *Prophets* had foretold, came upon that people when they least expected them. It was not the *Courage* and *Spirit* of *Alexander* with his *Macedonian Army* could have made such sudden and easie conquests of the *East*; if *God* by his Providence had not strangely made way for his success by intuating the *Counsels* of *Darius*, so as to give him those advantages against himself he could never have hoped for. There is no such mighty difference in the wits and contrivances of men; no such great advantages in military power and conduct; no such wonderfull disproportion in the courage, or wisdom, or educations of men; but when *God* hath pleased to let loose the most rude, and barbarous, and

If. 45. 2, 3.

unexperienced Nations in matters of War, upon the most flourishing Kingdoms, the most disciplin'd Armies, the most fortified Cities, they have in spite of all opposition over-run, overcome, and overthrown them. Who could have thought that the cowardly *Goths* (as they were then esteemed) the barbarous *Vandals*, and the despicable *Hunns*, could have made such havock and devastations in the *Roman Empire*, that in fifty years time, more of it was lost and destroyed by their means, than had been gained in a thousand? It would make ones heart bleed to read the miseries which all the parts of the *Roman Empire* suffered, where these *Barbarians* prevailed; and yet they were despised and reproached by the *Grave and Wise Romans* at the same time when they were conquered and destroyed by them; as

Salvian. de
Gib. Dei,
l. 7.

Salvian who lived then, at large relates. But the best and wisest men could not but see an extraordinary hand of God going along with them; and one of their greatest *Generals* found himself carried on by such a mighty impulse, and met with such an unaccountable success in all his undertakings, that he called himself *Flagellum Dei*, The Scourge in God's hand to

to chastise the wickedness and follies of men that called themselves *Christians*, and did not live like such. *Machiavel* Disput. in Liv. l. 2. c. 29. himself takes notice of so strange a difference in the Conduct and success of the *Romans* at different times, that he saith, *they could hardly be imagined to be the same People*; and after all his attempts to find out other causes, he at last is forced to conclude that there is a *superiour cause* to the Counsels of men which governs the affairs of mankind, which he calls *Fate*, and we much better, the *Providence of God*. Some learned *Physicians* are of opinion that when diseases are not curable by common remedies, there is in them τὸ Θεῖον, something divine, and therefore in such cases *Divine Remedies* are the most proper and effectual: thus in the alterations of *States* and *Kingdoms*, there is often a τὸ Θεῖον, a more than ordinary *hand of God*, in which cases the best means we can use to prevent danger is by *Fasting* and *Prayer*, by true repentance and speedy *Reformation* of our evil ways.

(4.) Because the Scripture still leaves hopes of Mercy to a People where they have a heart to repent. I do not find by

H. Jordanus de eo quod in morbis est divinum, Conring. Epist. 29.

by any declaration of God's Will in Scripture, that he hath made any such peremptory decree concerning the ruin of a Nation, but upon their repentance there is a way left to escape it; but rather the contrary in those words

Jer. 18. 7. ^{8.} of Jeremiah, *At what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down and to destroy it: If that Nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil which I thought to do unto them.* And therefore all threatnings of that kind are conditional, as this in the text is, *But if ye shall still do wickedly:* which implies that if they did cease to do so, they might be preserved, both they and their King. And where repentance hath intervened between the threatning and execution of judgment, God hath shewed wonderfull kindness either in stopping, removing, or deferring the severity of judgments.

1. In *stopping* his hand when it hath been *lifted up*, and just ready to *strike*. We can desire no clearer instance in that case than that of *Nineveh*; a vast City (or rather a Country inclosed in Walls) full of all the delights of *Asia*, and of the sins which usually attend them;

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them; to this City God sends a Prophet to let them know how near they were to destruction, that *they had but forty days time* to turn themselves in. This was a strange and unexpected alarm to them, given by a strange Prophet after a peremptory manner to a people unacquainted with such messages. How many objections would the Infidels and Scepticks of our Age have made against such a Message as this: They would rather have concluded the Prophet *Mad*, than have been perswaded to repent by him. Yet so great was the apprehension they had of the just desert of their sins, that the *People of Nineveh believed God and proclaimed a Fast, and put on Sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least: and they cryed mightily to God, and turned from their evil ways:* And what then? Would God disparage the reputation of his *Prophet*, and alter the sentence he had sent him so far to denounce against them? What hopes had he given them of mercy if they repented? It appears they had nothing but general presumptions, *Who can tell, if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger that we perish not?* Yet sincere repentance being per-

v. 5.

v. 8.
v. 10.

v. 9.

performed upon no greater assurance than this, prevailed so with God, that he repented of the evil that he said he would do unto them, and he did it not. O the depth of the riches both of the *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of God! His *Wisdom* in leading them to repentance; his *Goodness* in forbearing to punish after so great provocations. What encouragement doth God hereby give to others to repent, when *Nineveh* was rescued from the very brink of destruction by it?

2. In removing his band when it hath struck. When *David's* vanity transported him so far, that without any necessity he would know the *Number* of his *People*; his heart did misgive him as soon as he had done it, and he confessed
 2 Sam. 24.
 10. he had sinned greatly in it; notwithstanding this, God sends a plague among the *People*, which touched *David* to the quick, as a tender *Father* is most sensibly punished in the loss of his *Children*; and then he cried, *Lo I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these Sheep what have they done?* And when the *Angel* had stretched out his band upon *Jerusalem* to destroy it, the *Lord* repented him of the evil, and said to the *Angel*, *It is enough, stay now thy band.* Behold therefore

fore the *goodness* and *severity* of God ; on them which fell *severity* ; but towards *Jerusalem* *goodness*. His *severity* was intended to make people avoid a vain confidence in their own *strength* and *numbers* ; his *goodness* to let them see how ready he is to draw back his hand when men truly repent.

3. In *putting* by the *stroke* for the present, or deferring the execution of his wrath. No *King* of *Israel* provoked God more than *Ahab* ; for it is said of him, *that he did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him ; and that he sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord.* At last the Prophet *Elijah* meets him in *Naboth's Vineyard* which he had just taken possession of by fraud and violence ; when *Ahab* saw such an unwelcome Guest in that place, his guilt made him ready to start back, and to say, *Hast thou found me, O mine enemy ?* The Prophet having this fair opportunity followed the blow he had given him so home, that *Ahab* was not able to stand before him : for it is said, that when *Ahab* heard the terrible judgments God denounced against him for his sins, *he rent his cloaths, and put Sackcloth upon his flesh* and

1 King 16.
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21. 25.

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v. 19.

and fasted, and in good earnest humbled himself before God; For so God himself owns that he did. I do not say he continued good after this; but he now heartily repented for the time; and for the time of repentance God enlarged his time of forbearance. *Because he humbled himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days.* Even a short repentance, when sincere, gains time, by a reprieve from punishment. When the sins of a Nation are grown to a great height, and become ripe for vengeance, the best Princes can obtain no more than not seeing *the evil in their own days*, as in the case of *Josiah* who was an excellent Prince, and a true lover of God and his Law, yet the people continued so hardened in their sins, though under some shew of Reformation; that the Prophets told him; *behold I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the Inhabitants thereof, &c.* But because his heart was tender, and he humbled himself before the Lord, he obtained that favour, that his eyes should not see the evil which he would bring upon them. If the People had been as good as *Josiah* was, there is no question, but even then God would have repented of the evil; but where there

2 Kin. 22.
16.

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there was such an obstinate impenitency, that neither God's Laws, nor the Prophet's threatnings, nor the Princes example could prevail upon them; all that his humiliation could obtain, was only a putting it off for his own time; and we have reason to think that their sins did hasten his end too; as sometimes the sins of a people make the best of Princes to be taken away from them: and when the ten Tribes were carried captive, their King *Hoshea* is said, *not* ^{2 Kin. 17.} *to have done evil as the Kings of Israel that were before him.* And to *Judah* after *Josias* his death, God punctually made good this threatning in the Text, *But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed both ye and your King.*

II. The second particular is, That according to the usual method of *Providence* the state or condition of a *People* is better or worse according to the general nature of their *Actions*. If they be good and vertuous, carefull to please God, just, sober, chaste, mercifull, diligent observers of God's Laws and their own, and dealing with other Nations according to the Laws of Nations, they will live in a much more flourishing and happy

happy condition; than a Nation can do where Atheism, Profaneness, and all sorts of Wickedness abound: which I shall prove two ways.

(1.) *Absolutely*, from the tendency of Religion and Vertue to promote the Honour, the Peace, the Courage and Safety of a People.

(2.) *Comparatively*, that Nations are more or less happy according to their virtues and vices.

(1.) *Absolutely*, and that will appear, (1.) From the tendency of true Goodness and piety to promote a Nation's Honour and Interest abroad. And no man is ignorant how much Reputation brings of real advantage to a Nation; and that a People despised are next to a People enslaved; and that it is impossible to hold up honour and esteem in the World, where the reputation of Vertue is lost.

(2.) From its tendency to maintain peace and tranquillity at home; preventing private quarrels, by justice, and honesty, and temperance, and chastity; and publick disturbances by avoiding idleness, and debauchery. and bad principles, which are the great nurseries of Rebellion; and teaching men quietness, patience,

patience, due government of themselves, and obedience *not only for wrath, but also for Conscience sake.* Whereas loose principles, and bad practices, and extravagant desires naturally dispose men to endeavour changes and alterations, in hopes of bettering themselves by them; and the prevalency of Vice doth un-
hinging Government, and weaken the strength and sinews of it.

(3.) From the keeping up the *spirits*, and securing the safety of men. A good Conscience makes a man dare to do his duty; but *the sinners in Zion are afraid*, Ec. 33. 14. *fearfulness hath surprised the Hypocrites.* These were men saith *Grotius*, who carried a fair shew for the present, but were inwardly prepared, if the *King of Babylon* got the better, to be of his *Religion*, whatever it was. Such men who are false to God, and really of no Religion at all, are full of thoughts and fears, not knowing what may happen; they dare not own what they would be, for fear it ruin them at present; and they dare not appear too much for what they seem to own, for fear of what may come hereafter. *If the Lord be God*, 1 Kim 18. 28. *saith Elijah, then follow him; but if Baal, then follow him:* No, say such men, if
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they durst speak their thoughts, we desire to be excused at present, we find there is a contest between them, and we do not yet know which will get the better, when we see that, you shall know our minds. As *Afinius Pollio* told *Augustus* in his Wars with *Anthony* he was resolved to be *præda victoris*, he would be of the Conqueror's side. But men that are sincere in any Religion, do hate and abhor such hypocritical Dissemblers, and despise and spue them out for their nauseous lukewarmness; and as men indeed of no Religion or Conscience, but for what serves to their present ends. But observe in what a lofty strain the Prophet sets forth the security and confidence which follows integrity. *He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly, he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and stoppeth his eyes from seeing evil. He shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks, bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure.* These were very critical and doubtfull times which the Prophet speaks of, and many were secretly for complying with the

v. 15.

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the *King of Assyria*, as believing it as impossible to withstand his force, as to dwell with everlasting burnings; the Prophet is so far from granting this, that he tells them all their security lay in being just and honest, and doing their duty, and then they would be as safe, as if they had constant provision among the most inaccessible Rocks. It is observable concerning the *Israelites*, that when they went about to secure themselves by subtle devices and contrivances of their own, making leagues and confederacies with the *King of Egypt* and other neighbour Princes, so often they were foiled, and baffled, and overcome by their enemies; but when they put their trust in *God*, and committed themselves to his protection, he preserved and delivered them from the greatest dangers. I will not deny that there was something peculiar in their case, having the Prophets directions; and to trust mans wisdom against God's was madness and folly in them. But setting that aside, as there is no security like to God's protection, so there is no reason to think that will be wanting to them who do their duty sincerely and put their trust in him.

(2.) *Comparatively*; If we do compare several Nations together, we shall find those to flourish most, and to be the most happy where men do most *fear God and work righteousness*; where piety and vertue have the greatest countenance and encouragement; and where vice and wickedness are the most discouraged and punished.

This may seem a *Paradox* at first hearing to those who consider by what ways of fraud and violence, of injustice and cruelty, of rapine and oppression, the great and mighty Empires of the world have been raised and maintained; and how little regard is shewed to any rules of Honesty, Justice, or the Laws of Nations in those Kingdoms and States which resolve to be great, and in spite of other Nations to maintain their Greatness.

Yet notwithstanding this plausible objection, the truth of my assertion will appear, if we understand it as we ought to do with these following Cautions.

1. That it is not to be understood of the largeness of dominion, or superfluity of riches, but of the true happiness of living in society together; which is by promoting the real *good* of all. To which

which the vastness of Empire, and immensity of riches is by no means necessary, but a sufficiency both of strength and treasure to defend it self in case of foreign enemies, and to provide for the necessities and conveniencies of all the Members of it. Those who have best consider'd these things, suppose that to be the most exact and perfect Idea of Government, where all things are in a certain measure, and have a proportion to each other so as most conduces to the true end of living; not to riot and luxury, not to softness and effeminacy, not to pride and ambition, not to the heaping up of riches without use and respect to a general good; but so as all men may according to their conditions and circumstances enjoy what they have or can get, with the greatest comfort to themselves and their friends, and do the most generous and vertuous actions.

Arist. Pol.
l. 4. c. 11.

2. That this is not to be understood of the private benefit of any particular persons, but of the *general good* of all sorts and conditions of men. The Eastern Monarchies have seem'd to be the most happy and flourishing to those who look at a distance upon them, and

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Polit. I. 3.
c. 14.

only observe the *Pomp* and *Grandeur* of their *Princes*, without looking into the *State* and *Condition* of the *People*. *Aristotle* observes, that the *Eastern* people had more wit and slavery with it, the *Northern* had less quickness and more liberty, the *Greeks* lying between both, had their share in both. But the *Eastern* slavery hath brought *Barbarism* into *Greece* it self; and the *Northern* Liberty hath so improved the wits, and given such encouragement to the industry of men, that our people at this day enjoy more benefit by the riches of the *East*, than those do among whom they grow. Can we call them a happy people that see much riches and enjoy none; having nothing which they can call their own, unless it be their slavery? That is certainly the happiest condition of a people, where the Prince sits upon the Throne of Majesty and Power, doing righteousness and shewing kindness; and the people sit every man under his *Vine*, and under his *Fig-tree*, enjoying the fruits of his own labours, or his Ancestor's bounty: Where the people think it their interest to support and obey their Prince; and the Prince thinks it his interest to protect and defend his people. *Happy*

is the People that is in such a case ; but Pl. 144. 15.
 above all, *happy is that People whose God*
is the Lord. For without his blessing,
 the best Government, the best Laws,
 the best Ministers can never preserve a
 Nations happiness; and there is no rea-
 son to expect his Blessing, but in the
 ways of Piety and Vertue.

3. That it is not to be understood of
 sudden and surprizing events, but of a
lasting and continued state. For when
 God had been highly provoked to punish
 several Nations for their sins ; he may
 give unexpected success to that *Nation*
 by whom he designs to punish the rest ;
 and when they have done that work,
 they may then suffer more smartly for
 their own iniquities. Of this we have
 a remarkable instance in *Scripture* ;
 God designed to punish the *Kingdoms*
of the earth for their sins ; to this pur- Jer. 25. 26.
 pose he raiseth up *Nebuchadnezar King*
of Babylon, whom he therefore calls *his* v. 9.
Servant ; and the first example of his se-
 verity was his *own People* ; when this 11.
 was done, then follow the desolations
 of *Egypt*, of *Phœnicia*, *Arabia*, and o-
 ther Countries in so strange a manner,
 that some have call'd it *the Age of the* Marsh. Chr.
destruction of Cities. But doth the King Can. p. 556.

Jer. 25. 15.
v. 26.

of *Babylon* think to escape himself? No, saith the Prophet, *the King of Sheshach shall drink after them*; his turn would come at last, when he had accomplished the design God sent him upon in the punishment of others. Thus for a time, a Nation may seem to flourish exceedingly, and be victorious over others while they are as *Scourges in God's hand* for the punishment of others, and when that work is over may suffer most severely for their own sins.

4. It is to be understood of Persons under *equal circumstances*, when we compare the condition of People with each other: not the Nobles of one Nation with the Peasants of another, nor the Princes with the People; but every rank and order of men with those of the same rank and condition.

And upon these terms, we need no other proof of the truth of this assertion, than the instance in the *Text* of the *People of Israel*; which will best appear by comparing the state of both *Kingdoms* after the *Body* of the *People* was broken into the *Kingdoms of Israel and Judah*. The *Kingdom of Israel* by *Jereboam's Policy*, and for *Reason of State*, fell off from the *Worship* of the true God,

God, and worshipped *the Calves of Dan and Bethel*. But did they prosper or succeed more than the *Kingdom of Judah*? The ten Tribes had a much larger territory, yet the *Kingdom of Judah* was stronger and flourished more, and continued longer by 135 years, than the *Kingdom of Israel* did; and when they were carried into *Captivity*, the ten Tribes were lost as to their name and interest among the *People of Assyria*; but the *two Tribes* were restored after 70 years *Captivity* under the *Princes of the Line of David*. If we compare the *Kings of Israel and Judah*, together; the *Posterity of David* was kept up among the *Kings of Judah*; but there were nine Families in the *Kingdom of Israel*; and but one of them lasted to the fourth Generation, and that was of *Jehu*, who did something towards the *Reformation of Religion*. Of the eighteen *Kings of Israel*, but eight escaped dying by the *Sword*: and it is easie to judge how miserable the *State* of that *People* must be, under so many violent changes of Government. Among the *Kings of Judah* those who were firmest to the true Religion prospered most, and the *Nation* under them enjoyed the greatest

greatest peace, or received the greatest deliverances, as in the days of *Asa*, *Jehosaphat* and *Hezekiah*. If we compare the times of the same *Kings* together, we shall find that while they adhered firmly to *God* and *Religion*, the *Nation* prospered exceedingly, as for a long time under the *Reigns* of *Solomon* and *Asa*; but when in their old Age they began to warp in their Religion and to decline in their Piety, nothing but trouble and confusion followed. So true did they find the saying of *Hanani* to

2 Ch. 16. 9. *Asa, the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him. But because he said, he had done foolishly in not relying on the Lord, but on the King of Syria,*
 v. 10. *therefore, saith he, from henceforth thou shalt have wars.* And from that time his Government was uneasie both to himself and his People; when he had imprisoned the Prophet for reproving him.

III. That there are some *circumstances* in the *sins* of a *Nation*, which do very much portend and hasten its Ruin. As,

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1. When they are committed after more than ordinary mercies received; such as in reason ought to keep men most from the commission of them; as greater knowledge of the *Will* of God that other *People* enjoy; more frequent warnings of their danger than others have had; many and great deliverances which *God* hath vouchsafed; when none of these things, nor all of them together do move a *People* to repent, they shew an obstinate and incorrigible temper, and therefore *God* may sooner proceed to punish them. *God* did not forbear to punish other *Nations* for their transgressions, but he began with his own *People*. *For lo I begin to bring* Jer. 25.29. *vil on the City which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? The destroying Angels in Ezekiel, were to be-* Ezek. 9.6. *gin at the Sanctuary. Judgment, saith St. Peter, must begin at the House of* 1 Pet. 4. *God.* He draws the line of his Justice parallel to that of his Mercy; and when every Mercy is put to the account, and heightens the guilt, the sum will soon rise so high to call for execution. The Prophet *Amos* tells *Damascus*, and *Gaza*, and *Tyre*, and *Edom*, and *Ammon*, and *Moab*, that none of them shall escape

scape being punished for their transgressions; they need not doubt, the Rod would come time enough upon them; but yet God would begin with his own
 Amos 3. 2. *Children: You only have I known of all the Families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.* Where God hath given wonderfull marks of his kindness, and many deliverances time after time, and yet they continue to *do wickedly*, there is the greater reason to expect sharper and severer punishments.

2. When they are committed with more than ordinary contempt of God and Religion. All Ages are bad enough; and every Age is apt to complain of it self, as the worst of any; because it knows more ill of it self, than of the foregoing. But yet there is a difference in the manner of sinning; sometimes the stream of wickedness hides its head, and runs under ground, and makes little noise, although it holds on the same course; at other times it seems to break forth like a mighty torrent as tho' it would bear down all before it, as tho' the fountains of the great Deep were broken up, and Hell were let loose, and the Prisoners there had shaken off their chains

chains and come up upon the earth ;
 When Atheism, Prophaneness and all
 manner of Wickedness grow impudent
 and bare-faced ; when men do not only
 neglect Religion, but reproach and con-
 temn it. *Shall I not visit for these*
things, saith the Lord, shall not my soul
be avenged on such a Nation as this ?
 God did forbear his People of Judah be-
 yond what they could have expected,
 waiting for their amendment ; but when
 they added impudence to their obsti-
 nacy, when they made sport with
 the Prophets, and turned their threat-
 enings into songs of mirth and drollery,
 then the peremptory decree came forth,
 and there was no hopes to escape. *But*
they mocked the messengers of God, and de-
spised his Words, and misused his Pro-
phets, untill the wrath of the Lord arose
against his People, till there was no reme-
dy. There still seemed to be some
 hopes left till they came to this temper.
 But when they *burlesqued* the Prophet
Jeremiah's words, and turned the expres-
 sions he used into *Ridicule*, crying in
 contempt, *The burden of the Lord*, which
 is called, *perverting the words of the li-*
ving God: when they turned *Ezekiel's*
words into pleasant songs, and made
 sport

Jer. 5. 9,
29.

2 Chr. 36.
16.

Jer. 23-34,
36.
Ezek. 33.
31.

In canti-
cum oris
sui ver-
sunt illor.
Vul. Lat.

sport with *God's judgments*, no wonder he was so highly provoked. For there can be no worse symptom to a people, than to laugh at the only means to cure them; and if this once grow common, it must needs make their condition desperate. For then it comes to *God's* turn to mock and laugh too; *Because I*

Prov. i. 24.

25.

26.

have called and ye have refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my Counsel, and would have none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh. Woe be unto that people whom the Almighty takes pleasure in punishing.

3. When there is an universal degeneracy of all ranks and conditions of men. I do not mean such as is common to humane nature, but from the particular vertues of their Ancestors, or a common practice of those vices which do most frequently draw down the judgments of God, and make him to have a *controversie with a Land*. By

Hos. 4.

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3.

swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing Adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood, therefore shall the Land mourn. It was a strange degree of corruption the People

ple of *Jerusalem* were fallen to before God led them into Captivity ; when the Prophet *Jeremiah* used those expressions to them, *Run ye to and fro in the streets* Jer. 5. 1. *of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it.* Could there ever be a fairer or kinder offer than this ? But as *Isaiah* expresseth it, *the whole head* Isa. 1. 5, 6. *was sick, and the heart faint ; from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores.* It seems a very strange passage in the *Law* of *Leprosie*, that if the *Leprosie* covered all Lev. 13, 12, 13, 14. *the flesh, the person was to be pronounced clean ; but if any raw flesh appeared, he was unclean :* which it is very hard to understand, unless it were that the power of infection was then gone. Such a state the *People of Jerusalem* seemed to have been in, there was no room for infection left, the plague of *Leprosie* had so over-run them, that there was no sound part left in the whole body.

Thus I have considered the influence which *doing wickedly* hath upon the *ru-*
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in of a Nation, it remains now that I make Application of this to our own case.

We have been a People that have received wonderfull Mercies and many signal Deliverances from God's hand. He hath placed us in a rich and fruitfull Land; and hath furnished us with so great plenty, that even that hath been thought our burden; hath blessed us with such an increase of Trade, that our Merchants far exceed those of *Tyre* both in Riches and Number. Our Ships of Trade are like a Valley of Cedars when they lie at home; and when they are abroad, they compass the earth, and make the riches of the *East* and *West-Indies* to meet in our Streets. And since like the *Prince of Tyre*, *our seat is in the midst of the Seas*, God hath thereby secured us from such sudden inroads and invasions of foreign Enemies as many of our Neighbour Countries do groan under at this day: where the miseries of War are felt before they are seen; and those who thought themselves at ease and quiet, may be surprised in their Beds, and before they are aware of it may themselves, and Families, and Goods, and Houses, and Country
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be all burnt and consumed together. But God hath compassed us about with a deep Sea and a large Channel, and given us such a powerfull Navy as may be both a Defence at home and a Terror abroad.

As to our civil Constitution, if we consider the admirable Temper of our Government, the Justice and Wisdom of our Laws, and the greatness of our Liberties, we have no reason to envy the condition of any people upon earth. And after all our intestine broils and confusions which our sins had brought upon us, God was pleased in a most surprising manner, without War or bloodshed, to our great satisfaction and the amazement of the World, to restore our Sovereign to his Throne, our Church and People to their just Rights and Liberties. And while our Neighbour Nations have lamentably suffer'd under all the dismal effects of a lasting War, he hath enlarged our Trade, continued our Peace, and thereby increased our prosperity, after we had smarted under a dreadfull Fire, and a raging Pestilence. Thus far all things tend still to make us a happy Nation, if we did know and value our own happiness.

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But that which above all other things should make us so, hath been the great Occasion of our Trouble, and is still of our Fears, and that is *Religion*. And yet in this respect we have advantages above any other *Nation* in the *Christian World*, having a *Church* reformed with so much *Wisdom* and *Moderation*, as to avoid the dangerous extreams on both sides. But even this hath enraged our *Adversaries* of the *Roman Church*, and made them the more restless to destroy it; and to stick at no means which they thought might tend to its ruin. O blessed *Jesus*! that ever thy Holy Name should be assumed by *Traytors* and *Murderers*; or that the promoting thy true *Religion* should be made the colour for the most wicked practices!

Not that the pure and peaceable *Religion* of *Jesus Christ* doth sowre and im-bitter the Spirits of Men towards each other, or dispose them to malice, hatred, revenge and cruelty (some of the worst passions of humane nature) or to the accomplishing their own ends by secret conspiracies and open violence, by treachery and falshood, by *Murders* and *Assassinations*, either on the *Ministers* of *Justice*, or on the most mercifull and
best

best natured of *Kings*. But be astonish-
 ed O ye *Heavens*, and tremble O *earth*,
 that hast brought forth such a *Generati-*
on of Vipers who are continually ma-
 king their way through the Bowels of
 their Mother, and as we have reason
 to believe have designed to destroy
 the Father of their Country. If these
 be the kind embraces of one that pre-
 tends to be the *Mother-Church*, if this
 be the paternal affection of the *Holy*
Father at Rome, if this indeed be zeal
 for the *Catholick Cause*, if this be the
 way to reconcile us to their Commu-
 nion, have we not great reason to be
 fond of returning into the *Bosom* of such
 a *Church* which may strangle us as soon
 as it gets us within her *Arms*? But there
 are some whose concernment it is, to
 make men believe there was no such
 dangerous plot intended; I meddle not
 with that evidence which lies before you,
 but there is one notorious circumstance
 obvious to all persons, and sufficient to
 convince any, which is the horrid Mur-
 ther actually committed on one of his
Majestys Justices of Peace, in cold blood,
 with great contrivance and deliberation.
 Do men imbrue their hands in blood,
 for nothing? Why no other Person,

why at such a time, why in such a manner? There was a reason for all this; he had taken the examinations; he knew too much to be suffer'd to live, and they hoped by his death to stifle his evidence, and to affrighten others from searching too far; and they managed that matter so, as though they had a mind to convince the World, they had no other end in taking away his life, but to prevent a further Discovery. And they whom his *Death* doth not convince, neither would they be convinced, *though he should rise again from the Dead.*

God forbid that we should charge such barbarous cruelties, such wicked conspiracies, such horrid designs on all who live in the *Communion* of that *Church*; but we must distinguish between the *seduced party* who are not thought fit to be trusted with such things, for fear their Consciences check at them, and their good nature disclose them; and the busie *Active Faction*, who are always restless and designing, and act by such *Maxims of Morality* as the more sober and modest *Heathens* would abhor. What hath this *Party* of men been doing among us this last hundred of years

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years and more, but plotting conspiracies, inflaming our differences, betraying our liberties, heightning our discontents, and in short, undermining the Foundations both of our Government and Religion? And shall such men always triumph that they are too hard for our Laws? and that like the *Cananites* and *Jebusites* to the *Children of Israel*, they will still be as scourges in our sides, and thorns in our eyes? If these things must be, I hope God designs it not to destroy us at last by them, but I am sure it doth prove and try us, whether we will hearken to the Commandments of the Lord, or to the vain Traditions of Men.

Jos. 23. 13.

God knows, I speak not these things out of any malice or ill-will to the Persons of any, for, that I may use St. Paul's words, *My heart's desire and prayer to God for them all is, that they might be saved.* And although I cannot bear them witness, yet my hopes are, some even of these may think they have a zeal for God in all this; but we are sure it is not according to knowledge. Such a blind zeal as the *Jews* had, who when they killed the *Apostles*, thought they did God good service. But it is so furious, so inhumane, so unchristian a zeal, that

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it is charity to them, as well as necessary care of our own safety, to keep them from a capacity of doing themselves and others mischief.

But before I conclude, the *Text* suggests to us three things, very pertinent to the *duty* of this *Day*; which I shall briefly recommend to your consideration.

1. Matter of *humiliation* for our *sins*, as they have an *influence* upon the *Nation's suffering*.

2. Matter of *Advice*, *Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth, and with all your heart*.

3. Matter of *encouragement*, *For, consider, what great things he hath done for you*.

1. Matter of *Humiliation* for our *sins*. Which have been many and great, and aggravated by all the *Mercies* and *Deliverances* which *God* hath vouchsafed to us; and therefore he may be justly provoked to punish us proportionably to the measures of our ingratitude and disobedience. Let us lay our hands upon our hearts this day, and seriously consider *what requital we have made to the Lord for all the benefits he hath bestowed upon us*: For the Light of his Truth, the

Purity

Purity of his Worship, the Power of his Grace, the Frequency of his Sacraments, the Influences of his Spirit, and the continuance hitherto of our established Religion, in spite of all opposition whatsoever. But have we not been guilty of too much sleighting that Truth, neglecting that Worship, resisting that Grace, contemning those Sacraments, quenching that Spirit; and of too great coldness and indifferency about matters of Religion? I do not fear that ever the Church of Rome should prevail among us by strength of Reason, or force of Argument, with all its specious colours and pretences, unless it be among those who understand neither one, nor the other Religion; but if men be loose in their principles, and unconcerned about Religion in general, there will not be courage and constancy enough to keep it out. I do much more fear Popery coming in at the back door of *Atheism* and *Prophaneness*; than under all its false and deceitfull pretences of *Universality* and *Infallibility*. And this those have been aware of, who have been so industriously sowing among us the seeds of *Irreligion*; knowing that if men be unconcerned as to all Religion, they will

never have the courage to oppose any; but will be sure to close with the prevailing side. Next to this, I know no greater advantage that they take against us, than from the unnatural heats and unchristian divisions which have been among us. If men were *wise* they would consider, *at least in this our day, the things which do belong to our Peace.* How can men answer it at the great day, if in such a critical time as this is, they stand upon little niceties and punctilio's of Honour rather than Conscience, or upon keeping up the interests of their several Parties, and do not those things which themselves think they lawfully may do towards an *Union* with us? I pray God, the continuance of these breaches may not look like an argument of divine Infatuation upon us. But what can we say to that looseness and debauchery of manners, to that riot and luxury, to that wantonness and prophaneness, to that fashion of customary swearing, and *Atheistick Drollery*, which have been so much and so justly complained of among us? I hope there are many thousands at this day in *England*, whose souls *abhor the abominations that are committed, and who mourn in secret*

secret for them, and therefore our case may not be so desperate as that of *Jerusalem* was. May we all this day so heartily repent of all these follies and impieties, that the Cause of our Fears which our sins give us being removed, we may hearken

(2.) To the matter of *Advice* here given, *Only to fear the Lord, and to serve him in Truth, and with all our heart.*

As though *Samuel* had said, Your hearts stand trembling still at the fear of God's judgments, when he doth but *lift up his voice in the Thunder*, and shew his Power in the Rain; I will tell you, how your hearts may be at ease and quiet from the fear of evil; Be faithfull to God, maintain and practise the true Religion, sincerely, diligently, constantly, universally, and never doubt his protection of you, let your enemies be never so many, or your dangers never so great. Nothing exposes men more to the Wrath and Vengeance of God, nor provokes him more to leave a People to their own counsels, than false heartedness in Religion and Hypocrisy do. For the Hypocrite thinks to put a trick upon
God

God Almighty ; and while he seems to carry it fair towards him, he is dealing underhand for his own security another way : And God is then concerned in honour to let the world see *he will not be mocked* ; for he knows how to *take the crafty in their own devices* ; and very often brings to nought the most politick fetches of self-designing men. For when men seek themselves, and not the honour of God or Religion, but are ready to betray what ought to be dearer than their lives, for some mean and private interests of their own, they are oft-times so far from compassing their ends, that they become the Scorn and Reproach of men. But if men preserve their integrity, and *hold fast to the thing that is right*, they preserve their honour, even among their enemies, and either escape troubles, or have the comfort of a good Conscience under them, and however things happen to them for a while, *they are sure to have peace at the last*.

v. 3. 3. Lastly, Here is matter of *incouragement*. For consider what great things *he hath done for you*. When Jacob was sent into Egypt, and your Fathers cried unto the Lord, then the Lord sent Mo-
ses

jes and Aaron which brought our Fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place. When their sins had brought them into great distresses afterwards, and they cryed unto the Lord and confessed their sins, then the Lord raised up Jerubbaal and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and you dwelled safe. Now consider, the same God who did those things, can do as great for you still; for his Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness are the same, and therefore you have the greatest reason to put your trust in him at all times, since he never forsakes them that Psal. 9. 10.
seek him.

v. 9.
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11.

Blessed be God that we have this day a farther argument for us to fear and serve him in truth, and with all our heart, by considering what great things he hath done for us. Many deliverances hath he wrought for us time after time, for which we ought still to be thankfull, since we yet enjoy the benefit of them. But the memory of former deliverances was almost worn out with many, and some began to question whether such holy and innocent men as the Fathers of the Society could be guilty of such horrid

horrid conspiracies; some were so perswaded of their *Loyalty*, that the Vipers seemed to have changed their natures and to have lost their teeth, and to be a very soft and innocent kind of Creatures. Insomuch, that they were hardly brought to believe there could be a plot among them, especially of so horrid a nature as this appears more and more to have been, when such a viperous brood were suffer'd not only to lie quiet in the Shade, but to sport themselves in the Sun, and to enjoy the freedom of their own retreats. But God doth bring to light the hidden things of darkness by such ways as shew his Providence, more than our prudence and foresight, that while we have the comfort, he alone may have the glory of our deliverance. But yet methinks we stand as it were upon the brink of a mighty Precipice, which is so full of horror, that we tremble to look down from it; we are at present held up by a strong hand, but as by one single thread, and can we then think our selves secure from so great a danger?

Blessed be God for that Unanimity, that Zeal, that Courage, that Constancy You have hitherto shewed in the
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maintenance of our *Church and Religion*; but there is so much yet to be done for a firm *Establishment* of it to all *Generations* (which now by his *Majesty's* *Gracious* favour is put into your hands) as calls for all our Prayers, and your particular Care, lest if this opportunity be let slip, you never have such another.

This seems to be an *Honour* reserved for this *Parliament*, as the *Crown* and *Glory* of all your endeavours for the *Publick Good*. Go on then, to raise up this *Monument* to your *Eternal Fame*. This will not only make you beloved and esteemed by the present Age, but this will endear your *Memories* to *Posterity*, and make *Ages to come rise up* and call this a *Happy Session*.

But lest our sins should yet hinder us from so great a *Blessing*, We have great reason to humble our selves before God this day, to bewail those sins which may yet provoke him to punish us, and by Fasting and Prayer to implore his Mercy; that he would go on to preserve his Majesty's Person from all violent attempts, our Church and Religion from all the designs of its enemies, and deliver us all from *Unreasonable and Wicked Men*.

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SERMON V.

Preached before the

KING

AT

WHITE-HALL,

March 7. 1678.

Matth. X. 16.

*Be ye therefore wise as Serpents,
and harmless as Doves.*

IN the beginning of this Chapter we read of one of the greatest and most improbable designs that ever was, viz. *Christ's* sending out his twelve *Apostles* to convert and to reform the World. For although the occasion of their

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their first *Mission*, was to prepare the Jewish Nation for entertaining the doctrine of the Messias, and therefore they are commanded to go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel; and as they went to preach; saying, *The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*; yet our Saviour in his following discourse mentions several things which cannot be applied to their first going abroad; particularly, that which relates to their hard usage and bad entertainment from the world; which we do not find they met with from the Jews upon this general message, but rather the contrary: for which cause he bids them to provide nothing for themselves, foreseeing that in all places there would be some that would be ready to receive them kindly; and when the *Seventy Disciples* were sent upon a like errand, they returned with joy, which such young beginners would hardly have done, if they had met with such sharp persecutions then, which Christ here foretells his *Apostles* should suffer for preaching the Gospel. Either therefore we must say that St. *Matthew* puts things together by way of common Place, as he seems to do the *Miracles* and *Parables* of our Saviour, without pursuing

v. 6.

v. 7.

v. 9, 10, 11.

Luk 10:17.

pursuing the *Order of time*, as *S. Luke* doth, and so upon occasion of *Christ's sending out his Apostles* sets down all that relates to their *Mission*, although delivered at several times; or else that *Christ* himself did now at first acquaint them with all the difficulties that should attend their employment in preaching the *Gospel* to the world; and consequently thought it necessary to give them at once their full instructions for their discharge of so great a trust, and due behaviour under so hard a service. A trust indeed so great, a service so hard as to require the *Wisdom* of an *Angel*, and the *Innocency* of *Adam* in *Paradise*; so many were the difficulties, so powerfull were the prejudices, so dangerous were the snares and temptations, which in all places did hinder the success of so great a Work. We are apt to admire and applaud the mighty conquests, which men do make over some small parts of the world, by the subtilty of their Wit, or by the force of their Arms, or by the vastness of their Treasure; but in all these cases, there is nothing wonderful; for the causes being supposed, there is at least a great probability the event should follow: But for twelve inconsiderable

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derable persons, as to all outward circumstances, without craft, without arms, without money, to undertake the conquest of the world, by changing not only mens opinions as to Religion, but which is far more uneasy, the hearts and lives of men; seems at first appearance so unlikely a thing, that though none but very wise men could hope to manage it, yet none who were thought so would ever undertake it. Yet no leis than this was the work which *Christ* sent abroad his *twelve Apostles* upon; and he tells them, very little to their comfort, what hardship they were like to meet with, *to be betrayed by friends, persecuted by enemies, and hated of all men for his names sake:* yea so great would the rage and malice and cruelty of men be against them, that he saith in the beginning of this verse, *Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of Wolves.* What! to be destroyed and devoured by them? No, but to turn those very *Wolves* into *sheep*. But what powerfull charms must they use to secure themselves from present danger, and to work such mighty change? no other than those which our Saviour recommends in the words of the Text, *Be ye therefore wise as Ser-*

R *pents;*

pents, and harmless as Doves. Not as though we were to search all the properties of *Serpents* and *Doves* to understand the meaning of these words, and to determine the truth or fallhood of all the relations that are made concerning both of them; but as *Solomon* chose the *Ant* for an example of *diligence*, so our Saviour designing to joyn *Wisdom* and *Innocency* together proposes the *Serpent* for one and the *Dove* for the other; to let his *Disciples* understand that he allows them so much *Wisdom* as is consistent with *innocency*, and persuades them to no more *simplicity* than is consistent with *Wisdom*. For *Wisdom* without *Innocency* turns into craft and cunning; and *Simplicity* without *Wisdom* is meer folly.

But the great difficulty lies in the joyning these two together. For as the world goes and is like to do, men will be apt to say, How can those be *as wise as Serpents*, who must be *as harmless as Doves*? If all the world were agreed in the practice of *innocency*, and men did not fare the worse for it, it might pass for *Wisdom*; but when they have to deal with others who will use all the *Wisdom* of the *Serpent*, and are so far from being

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ing *harmless as Doves*, that they will take all the advantages that mens innocency and simplicity gives them, it seems hard to reconcile these two together. To what purpose, may some say, are mens eyes bid to be open, when their hands are tied up? Had they not better be without the *Serpent's* sagacity and quickness of sight, than espy their dangers, and not use the most likely means to prevent them? What doth the *simplicity* of the *Dove* signifie, but to make them a more easie quarry for the birds of prey? Simplicity, and innocency, and patience, which our Saviour recommends under the phrase of being *harmless as Doves*, are good lessons for another world, but what do they signifie in this, which is made up of nothing but artifice and fraud, and wherein the great art and business of life seems to be over-reaching and deceiving one another? Those only seem to have the true subtilty of the *Serpent* who can turn and wind themselves every way as makes most for their advantage; who by their soft and easie motions, by their artificial glidings and insinuations get an interest great enough to mischief while they watch for an opportunity to

2 Cor. 11. 3.
Ramirez
de Prado
Pentecost.
c. 1.

do it. *As the Serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, i. e. say the Fathers* by the familiarity and easiness of access which he had, playing, as some fancy, about the Neck and Arms of *Eve* in the state of Innocency. Those have the true subtilty of the *Serpent* who creep into houses and understand the secrets of persons and families; and so know how to address, and how to keep in awe: who seem *as harmless as Doves* till they have a fair opportunity of instilling their poison, and do the greater mischief by being thought so innocent. Who have the dangerous teeth and the double tongue, who can deny the Truth without lying, and forswear themselves without perjury; who would sanctifie the greatest villainies by their good intentions; and when they are *ravenous as Wolves*, and as *cruel as Vultures*, would yet be thought *as harmless as Doves*, or as innocent *as a Child new born*.

What now can simplicity and innocency, and meekness, and patience signify against all this serpentine subtilty? And if you take away from the *Serpent* his artificial motion and his poison, you leave him weak and contemptible, ready to be trampled on by every passenger,

ger, having nothing to defend himself but his skin and eye-sight. And if you do allow his most natural properties, the innocency of the Dove is a very unequal match for him if they be opposed, and seem of so different natures that they can hardly be joyned together in the same subject.

And yet notwithstanding all these objections, it was certainly the design of our *Saviour* in these words,

1. To recommend the *conjunction* and *union* of these two to his disciples, *being wise as Serpents, and harmless as Doves.*

2. To do it chiefly upon this consideration, that this would be the best means to promote his Religion against all the arts and designs of men, as well as the best security for themselves.

And therefore in the prosecuting this subject, I shall endeavour these two things,

1. To shew wherein the *conjunction* of these two doth consist.

2. That this is the best *means* to promote the *Christian Religion* against all the mischievous arts and devices of men.

1. Wherein the *conjunction* of these two doth consist. It is no hard matter

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to tell men how they may be *wise as Serpents, &c.* By foresight and caution, so as to discern and prevent unnecessary dangers; not to run themselves foolishly and vainly upon needless troubles, nor to draw persecutions upon themselves, when they can decently and lawfully avoid them; not to give advantages to their enemies by their weakness and indiscretion, nor a just occasion of offence to any; but in all lawfull things to endeavour to gain upon them, and by all acts of kindness and charity to recommend our Religion to them. Neither is it hard to tell wherein we must appear to be *harmless as Doves, viz.* by simplicity and integrity of mind, by meekness and patience, by forgiving injuries, and bearing persecutions as becomes *Christians*, by a holy, innocent, and unblameable conversation: but the difficulty still lies in the *conjunction* and *mixture* of both these; which as *S. Chrysostom* observes, is the thing which Christ especially aims at, so as to make one vertue arise from both of them; as *Greg. Nazianzen* said of his Father, *That he neither suffered the Wisdom of the Serpent to degenerate into cunning, nor the innocency of the Dove into indiscretion,*
but

*Chrysost. in
 loc.*

*Greg. Na-
 zian. orat.
 19.*

but made up one compleat kind of vertue from the mixture of both together; and that I suppose lies in these things, (1.) *Integrity of Mind*, (2.) *Ingenuity*, or fairness of behaviour, (3.) *Meekness and Patience*: and in the due practice of these consists that *prudent Simplicity* which results from these two, *being wise as Serpents, and harmless as Doves*. Which I shall make appear by shewing, that men cannot be *harmless as Doves* without them; and that they are so far from being inconsistent with being *wise as Serpents*, that a great part of *Wisdom* lies in them.

I. *Integrity of Mind*; which is opposed to falseness and hypocrisy; and therefore St. Paul joyns *simplicity and godly sincerity* together. We read of some in *Scripture* who are said to have a *double heart*, as well as a *double tongue*: they are διψυχoi, saith St. James, men with *two Souls*, one for God and another for the world; or rather none at all for God, (since he must have all or none) but one to appearance and another in reality, having quite other thoughts, intentions and designs than they make the world believe. Some

2 Cor. 1. 12.
Psal. 12. 2.
Jam. 4. 8.

Ibid. Orig.
J. 12. c. 4.

tell us that the Serpent hath no forked tongue, but through the quickness of its motion, and suddenness of its vibration it appears to be so; men have but one heart and mind, but they may use such artificial motions and sudden turnings, as to appear to have more. But this is contrary to that integrity and simplicity which Christ requires, and the *Scripture* every where so much extols, as to place mens *perfection* and *wisdom* in it. *Gen. 6. 9.* Noah was said to be a just man and perfect in his Generations, because he maintained his integrity in a very corrupt and degenerate Age. *Job* is said to be a man perfect and upright, one that feareth God and escheweth evil: and *Job 1. 1.* in another place of *Job*, the perfect and the wicked are opposed: *Job 9. 22.* he destroyeth the perfect and the wicked; i. e. the good and the bad. *Pf. 37. 37.* Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, saith the Psalmist. *Prov. 11. 5.* The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way, saith Solomon; but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness, and in the next words; *6.* The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them, but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness. And if Solomon's word may be taken, a man's integrity is his greatest wisdom;

dom; for *righteousness*, saith he, *keepeth him that is upright in the way; but wickedness overthroweth the sinner. He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely; but he that perverteth his ways shall be known.* And therefore he concludes that *a man of understanding will walk uprightly.*

13. 6.

10. 9.

15. 21.

All this seems a strange Paradox, and to come from such as are not versed in business, nor acquainted with affairs of the world, or from those who are resolved to maintain their hypothesis, though against the common sense of mankind, as the Stoicks of old, who made their Wise man beautifull though never so deformed, rich though ready to starve for poverty, and a Prince though sold for a slave; just thus doth it seem to some men to talk of the consistency of Wisdom and Simplicity together, or to suppose those take the most prudent care of their own interest, who are tied up to the strict rules of downright honesty, and are resolved with *Job to hold fast their integrity.*

But that there is nothing absurd or unreasonable in this supposition, nothing but what is true, and may be justified by the common sense and experience

rience of mankind will appear by these considerations.

1. That is the truest Wisdom of a man which doth most conduce to the happiness of life. For Wisdom as it refers to action lies in the proposal of a right end, and the choice of the most proper means to attain it. Which end doth not refer to any one part of a man's life, but to the whole as taken together. He therefore only deserves the name of a Wise Man, not that considers how to be rich and great when he is poor and mean, nor how to be well when he is sick, nor how to escape a present danger, nor how to compass a particular design; but he that considers the whole course of his life together, and what is fit for him to make the end of it, and by what means he may best enjoy the happiness of it. I confess it is one great part of a wise man never to propose too much happiness to himself here; for whoever doth so, is sure to find himself deceiv'd, and consequently is so much more miserable as he fails in his greatest expectations. But since God did not make men on purpose to be miserable, since there is a great difference as to mens conditions, since that difference depends

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pendes very much on their own choice, there is a great deal of reason to place true wisdom in the choice of those things which tend most to the comfort and happiness of life.

2. That which gives a man the greatest satisfaction in what he doth, and either prevents or lessens or makes him more easily bear the troubles of life, doth the most conduce to the happiness of it. It was a bold saying of *Epicurus*, *That it is more desirable to be miserable by acting according to reason, than to be happy in going against it*; and I cannot tell how it can well agree with his notion of felicity: but it is a certain truth, that in the consideration of happiness, the satisfaction of a man's own mind doth weigh down all the external accidents of life. For, suppose a man to have riches and honours as great as *Ahasuerus* bestowed on his highest favourite *Haman*; yet by his sad instance we find that a small discontent when the mind suffers it to encrease and to spread its venom, doth so weaken the power of reason, disorder the passions, make a man's life so uneasy to him, as to precipitate him from the height of his fortune into the depth of ruin. But on the other

other side if we suppose a man to be always pleased with his condition, to enjoy an even and quiet mind in every state, being neither lifted up with prosperity, nor cast down with adversity, he is really happy in comparison with the other. It is a mere speculation to discourse of any compleat happiness in this world ; but that which doth either lessen the number, or abate the weight, or take off the malignity of the troubles of life, doth contribute very much to that degree of happiness which may be expected here.

3. The integrity and simplicity of a man's mind doth all this. (1.) It gives the greatest satisfaction to a man's own mind. For although it be impossible for a man not to be liable to error and mistake, yet if he doth mistake with an innocent mind, he hath the comfort of his innocence, when he thinks himself bound to correct his error. But if a man prevaricates with himself and acts against the sense of his own mind, though his conscience did not judge aright at that time, yet the goodness of the bare act with respect to the rule, will not prevent the sting that follows the want of inward integrity in doing it. *The back-*
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Consider in heart, saith Solomon, shall be Prov. 14. 14.
filled with his own ways, but a good man
shall be satisfied from himself. The do-
 ing just and worthy and generous things
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 leaves a most agreeable pleasure to the
 mind, like that of a constant health
 which is better felt than expressed. When
 a man applies his mind to the know-
 ledge of his duty, and when he doth
 understand it, (as it is not hard for an
 honest mind to do, for as the Oracle Clem. Alex.
 answered the Servant who desired to Ser. 4.
 know how he might please his Master,
If you will seek it, you will be sure to find
it,) sets himself with a firm resolution to
 pursue it, *though the rain falls, and the*
floods arise, and the winds blow on every
side of him, yet he enjoys peace and
 quiet within, notwithstanding all the
 noise and blustering abroad; and is sure
 to hold out after all, because he is found-
 ed upon a rock. But take one that en-
 deavours to blind, or corrupt or master
 his conscience, to make it serve some
 mean end or design; what uneasie re-
 flections hath he upon himself, what per-
 plexing thoughts, what tormenting fears,
 what suspicions and jealousies do disturb
 his imagination and rack his mind? what
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art and pains doth such a one take to be believed honest and sincere? and so much the more, because he doth not believe himself: He fears still he hath not given satisfaction enough, and by overdoing it, is the more suspected. It is a very unsatisfactory imployment that man hath who undertakes to persuade others of the truth of that which himself at the same time knows to be false; for he is not convinced by his own arguments, and therefore despises those that are, and is afraid of those that seem to be; either he thinks them fools for believing him, or that they only flatter and seem to believe when they do not; and then he thinks his arts are understood and his credit lost, and fears while he goes about to impose upon others, they may do the same by him. So that unless he could see into the hearts of men, (which would be no very comfortable sight to him) all his craft and subtilty must leave him under perplexity and continual fear. But suppose that through over officiousness he happens to take some false step, and so fall into the disfavour of those whom above all he desired to please; how miserable is that man's condition when he finds

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finds himself forsaken of God, despised by men, and without any peace or contentment within? (2.) Because integrity doth more become a man, and doth really promote his interest in the World. It is the saying of *Dio Chrysostom* an Heathen Orator, *that Simplicity and Truth is a great and wise thing; but Cunning and Deceit is foolish and mean; For,* saith he, *observe the beasts, the more courage and spirit they have, the less art and subtilty they use; but the more timorous and ignoble they are, the more false and deceitfull.* True Wildom and Greatness of mind raises a man above the need of using little tricks and devices. Sincerity and honesty carries one through many difficulties which all the arts he can invent would never help him through. For nothing doth a man more real mischief in the world than to be suspected for too much craft; because every one stands upon his guard against him, and suspects plots and designs where there are none intended; insomuch that though he speaks with all the sincerity that is possible, yet nothing he saith can be believed. And is this any part of true wisdom to lose reputation, upon which mens power and interest

*Dio Chrys.
de regu. or.
1. p. 6.*

terest so much depends? From hence the most artificial men have found it necessary to put on a guise of simplicity and plainness, and make greatest protestations of their honesty when they most lie in wait to deceive. If then the reputation of integrity be so necessary, the main point to be considered as to wisdom is this, whether such reputation can be sooner gained and longer held by mere pretending to simplicity, or by the practice of it? He that only pretends to it, must act otherwise than he designs, and yet is concerned to make others believe he doth not: but in this he puts a force and constraint upon himself which is uneasie to any man, and he lets the vizard fall off sometimes when it is more observed than he thinks, and then his countenance is taken at the greatest disadvantage, and this is given out for the only true Copy. And while he keeps it on, it is a hard matter to deceive all eyes; for it may be some by-standers have practised the same arts themselves, and they know the make and the fashion, and all the several strings which help to keep it from falling off: and when the suspicion grows strong, the laying aside the disguise will

will not be able to give satisfaction. But *he that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart,* as the *Psalmist* describeth the practice of integrity, may possibly meet with such as will be ready to condemn him for hypocrisie at first; but when they find he keeps to a certain rule, and pursues honest designs, without any great regard to the opinion which others entertain concerning him; then all that know him cannot but esteem and value him; his friends love him, and his enemies stand in awe of him. *The path of the just,* saith the *Prov. 4. 18.* *Wise man, is as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* As the day begins with obscurity and a great mixture of darkness, till by quick and silent motions the light overcomes the mists and vapours of the night, and not only spreads its beams upon the tops of the Mountains, but darts them into the deepest and most shady Valleys: thus simplicity and integrity may at first appearing look dark and suspicious, till by degrees it breaks through the clouds of envy and detraction, and then shines with a greater glory. Thus the Christian Simplicity was despised and

reproached as folly and obstinacy, and many hard censures and sharp persecutions did men undergo for the sake of it for a long time, (as the most durable Kingdoms have had the sharpest pangs and been the longest in the birth:) but at last persecuted and despised innocency prevailed over all the craft and power of the World. It was then the great glory of Christians that their enemies could reproach them for nothing but their Religion; that they were in all other things honest and good men, only they were Christians: and then true Religion is most like to prevail in the world, when mens other vertues commend their Religion, and not when zeal for their Religion is their only vertue. When righteousness, and peace, and humility, and charity, and temperance, and patience, and a constant integrity make men enquire after a Religion which produces such fruits as these are, then it will appear that Apostles and preachers of Religion are then *wise as Serpents* as to the promoting the honour of their Doctrine, when by the innocency and simplicity of their lives they are *harmless as Doves*.

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(3.) But suppose that troubles and persecutions do arise, what becomes of the *harmless Doves* then? they are soon taken and easily destroyed, when those who are only *wise as Serpents* may see many ways to escape danger, which the innocent Doves dare not follow them in; what wisdom then can there be in so much simplicity as makes suffering unavoidable?

This is the hardest part of the case, but that which our Saviour doth here suppose, when he saith, *Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of Wolves; be ye therefore wise as Serpents, &c.* So that, if we cannot make out this to hold in respect of sufferings, we must yield this counsel or advice of Christ to his Disciples to be defective as to the main occasion of it. To this therefore I answer in these particulars;

1. Our Saviour doth allow the *wisdom of prevention* as to all unnecessary dangers; for otherwise he would never have bid his Disciples *be wise as Serpents*, but only be *as quiet as Sheep and as harmless as Doves*. God forbid that Christian simplicity should be taken in so ill a sense as to hinder us from a just and necessary care of our own safe-

ty : and not only for the preservation of our selves but of our Religion too. When we have liberty and opportunity to do it, it is being stupid as Sheep, and careless as the Ravens of their young ones, and not being only *harmless as Doves*, to neglect the doing it. In such a case it is a violation of the duty we owe to God and to Posterity, if we do not use all lawfull endeavours for the preservation of our selves and our Religion from all the attempts of wicked and unreasonable men. But in case storms do arise after all our care, Christ doth not seem to forbid his Disciples making use of a present shelter till the storm be blown over; *But when they persecute you in this City, flee to another.* And some say, the likeness to Doves is recommended in regard that its safety lies chiefly in the quickness of its flight. But our Saviour neither imposes a necessity of suffering in all cases, nor allows a liberty of flying upon every apprehension of danger, but leaves this matter to be determined according to circumstances, as makes most for God's honour, and his Church's good: *i.e.* herein to be *wise as Serpents and harmless as Doves*; by not exposing themselves

Mat. 10. 23.

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 ence, nor declining any necessary duty
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 follow upon it. There were some in
 the *Primitive Church* who thought it
 unlawfull in any case to avoid persecu-
 tion, and *Tertullian* pleads their cause
 with many plausible reasons; saying,
That persecution is designed on purpose
for tryal by God himself; that the allow-
ance for flying was peculiar to the Apostles
case, not to avoid persecution, but for the
more speedy propagation of the Gospel;
 and some of the Christians were so far
 from flying that they ran upon persecu-
 tion, and seemed ambitious of Martyr-
 dom. *S. Chrysostom* saith, *It was one of*
the reasons Julian gave why he would not
openly persecute Christianity; because he
knew the Christians gloried in being Mar-
tyrs; and he would not humour them so
much as to spread his Nets to catch such
filly Doves, that never minded the dan-
ger they fell into. But the Christian
Church never approved rash and indis-
creet suffering, as much as it encouraged
 all Christians to patience and courage
 and perseverance; for they required not
 only a *just cause*, but a *necessary occasion*

Tertul. de
fug. c. 1 & c.
c. 6.

Chrys. hom.
40. in Juv.
& Max.

Clem. Alex.
Str. 4 p.
481.

of suffering, and blamed those who hastened their own destruction; for they observe that *Christ* himself made use of prudent caution when he knew the Jews had designed to put him to death; for it is said, *from thence forward he walked no more publickly among the Jews.* When the storms seemed to threaten the lead-

Orig in Joh.
Tom. 31.

ers of the Church in such a manner that by their withdrawing the People might probably enjoy more quiet, and not want help enough to perform the necessary Offices, even the *Bishops* were allowed to retire; and upon this ground

Cypr. ep. 14.
Athan. de.
fuga.

S. Cyprian and *Athanasius* justified themselves: but when the case is common, when the necessities of the Church require the presence of their Pastors, *then the good Shepherd must lay down his life for the Sheep*, as *S. Augustin* hath resolved this case in his *Epistle to Honoratus*. So that this whole matter belongs to *Christian prudence*, which is then most needfull and fit to be used, when the resolution of the case depends upon particular circumstances; so as not to shun any necessary duty for fear of danger, nor to run upon any unnecessary trouble to shew our courage.

Aug. ep.
180.

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2. Since no wisdom is great enough to prevent all troubles of life, that is the greatest which makes them most easie to be endured. If the *Wisdom of the Serpent* could extend so far as to avoid all the calamities that mankind is subject to, it would have a mighty advantage over the *simplicity* of the *Dove*; but since the most subtle contrivers cannot escape the common accidents of life, but do frequently meet with more vexations and crosses than innocent and undesigning men do, we are then to consider, since the burden must be born, what will make it sit most easily upon our shoulders: And that which abates of the weight, or adds to our strength, or supports us with the best hopes, is the truest wisdom. *And who is he that* 1 Pet. 3.13. *will harm you, saith S. Peter, if ye be followers of that which is good? i. e. innocency is the best security against trouble which one can have in this World; but since the World is so bad as that the best may suffer in it, and for being such, yet that ought not to trouble or affright them; But and if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.* But should it not trouble a man

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to suffer innocently? yes, with a respect to others, but as to himself he may more justly be troubled if he suffered justly. For nothing makes sufferings so heavy to be born as a *guilty Conscience*: that is a burden more insupportable to an awakned mind than any outward affliction whatsoever. *Judas* thought himself to be *wise as a Serpent*, not only in escaping the danger which he saw Christ and his Disciples falling into by the combination of the Priests, and Scribes, and Pharisees against them; but in ingratiating himself with them and making a good bargain for his own advantage: but the want of a *Dove-like innocency* marred his whole design; and filled his conscience with such horror as to make him own his guilt, and put an end to his miserable life. Whereas the other *Apostles* whose chief care was to preserve their innocency as to any wilfull sins, though they had too much of the *fearfulness* as well as the *simplicity* of *Doves*, till the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them; yet they held out in the midst of fears and dangers, and came at last *to rejoyce* in their sufferings. And *S. Paul* tells us what the cause of it was, *For our rejoycing*

Act. 5. 41.

2 Cor. 1. 12.

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joycing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world. See here, not only what peace and serenity, but what rejoycing follows an innocent mind, and the testimony of a good conscience! when all the arts of fleshly Wisdom will be found vain and useles, affording no satisfaction to a man's mind, when he looks back upon all of them, then sincerity and integrity of heart will give a man the most comfortable reflections, and fill him with the most joyfull expectations. This enables a man to look back without horror, to look about him without shame, to look within without confusion, and to look forward without despondency. So that as the straight line is the shortest of any; so upon greatest consideration it will be found that the upright and sincere man takes the nearest way to his own happiness.

II. Prudent Simplicity implies the practice of *Ingenuity*; which is such a natural freedom in our words and actions, that men may thereby understand the sincerity of our mind and intention.

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Not that men are bound to declare all they know to every impertinent enquirer, which is *simplicity* without *prudence*; but in all cases wherein men ought to declare their minds, to do it without *fraud* and *dissimulation*; and in no case to design to over-reach and deceive others. This is that *simplicity* of *Conversation* which our Saviour requires when he

Mat. 5. 37. *faith, let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay, i. e. you ought to converse with so much sincerity, that your bare affirmation or denial may be sufficient, this being the proper use of speech that men may understand each others minds by their words: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil, i. e. the wickedness of mankind and that distrust and suspicion which is occasion'd by it, is the reason they are ever put to make use of oaths to make their Testimony appear more credible. And therefore nothing but such necessity can justifie the use of them; Oaths and Wars being never lawfull but when they are necessary. Some understand the reduplication of those words, yea, yea, nay, nay, after a more emphatical manner; viz. that our words must not only agree with the truth of the thing, but with the*

*Mollev. de
abusu restr.
ment. C. 12.
Sect. 3. p.
98.*

the conception and sense of our minds; and so the greatest candour and sincerity is commanded by them. Truth was described of old, *sitting upon an Adamant, with Garments white as Snow, and a light in her hand*, to intimate that clearness and simplicity and firmness that doth accompany it; such as was most remarkable in the primitive *Christians*; who abhorred any thing that looked like dissimulation and hypocrisie, especially in what concerned their Religion. In this they were plain and open, hearty and sincere, neither exasperating their enemies by needless provocations, nor using any artificial ways of compliance for their own security. When the casting some few grains of incense on the altar, and pouring out wine before the Emperor's statue might have saved their lives, they chose rather to die than to defile their consciences with that impure and idolatrous Worship. To be dismissed after summons to the tribunal without compliance was a scandal, and raised suspicions of some secret assurances given; to be proclaimed to have sacrificed though they had not, and not to contradict it was great infamy; to procure a certificate of sacrificing though they

*Themist.
orat. 3.*

*Enseb. l. 8.
c. 3.*

*Rigalt. ad
Cypr. ep. 81:*

*Aug. de
Mend. c. 13.*

they did not; or to pay fees to the Officers to be excused from doing it, made them a sort of *libellati*, although their names were never entred in the Heathen Rolls, and they were forced to undergo severe penance before they were restored to the communion of the Church. So much simplicity and singleness of heart was then supposed necessary to the Christian profession. No *directing the intention*, no *secret reservation*, no *absolution* either before committing the fact or immediately upon confession of it, were ever heard of or allowed in those days of Christian innocency and simplicity. If the Heathen Officers sought after *Christians*, they neither lyed to them, nor betrayed their Brethren; but would rather endure torments themselves, than expose others to them; for which reason S. *Augustin* highly commends the resolution of *Firmus* an *African Bishop*, who rather chose to be tortured himself than discover a Christian committed to his care who was sought after for no other reason, but because he was a Christian; and the *Heathen Emperor* himself was so pleased with it, that for his sake he forgave the other person and suffered him to enjoy his liberty. When
the

the Christians were summoned before the Heathen Tribunals, they used no *shifting tricks or evasions*, they concealed no part in their minds of what was necessary to make what they spake to be true ; they did not first peremptorily deny what they knew to be true, and then back such a denial with horrid oaths and dreadfull imprecations upon themselves, and after all think to justify the doing so by vertue of some *secret reservation* in their own minds. Is this becoming the *simplicity* and *ingenuity* of *Christians*? Such may possibly think themselves *Wise as Serpents* in so doing, but I am sure they are far from *being innocent as Doves*. But are there any who go under the name of *Christians*, who own and defend such practices? I think indeed scarce any who went under the name of *honest Heathens* ever did it. For they did not only require constancy and fidelity in oaths and promises, but simplicity and sincerity both in the making and keeping of them. They condemned the *Romans* who thought to avoid their oath by a trick, and sent them back to the *Carthaginians*: they mightily applaud the constancy of *Regulus* in observing the words of his oath

Cicer. de
Offic. l. 1.
& 3.

*Entych.
Alex. To.
2. p. 119.*

P. 123.

oath as to his return, although very capable of a mental reservation; and if he did not promise the *Carthaginians* to perswade the *Roman* Senate to the Peace, he behaved himself with great sincerity as well as constancy. When the King of *Persia* thought by a trick to avoid the oath he had made to one of his Neighbour Princes, viz. That he would not pass such a stone which was set up as a Boundary between them, and he took up the stone and caused it to be carried before his Army; his Counsellors told him they feared such deceit would never prosper with him, because as the Prince sent him word, Covenants are to be understood according to the plain meaning of the words, and not according to any secret reservation.

Since then the very Heathens disallowed such artifices and frauds, are there any worse than Heathens that justify and maintain them? Is not this rather an artifice and fraud of their Adversaries to render them odious? But even in this respect we ought to be *harmless as Doves*, and therein lies a necessary part of Christian Ingenuity, in not charging on others more than they are guilty of.

I

I shall therefore fairly represent the doctrine held in the Church of Rome about these matters, and leave you to judge how far it is consistent with *Christian Simplicity*.

There are some things wherein the Divines of the Roman Church are agreed, and some things wherein they differ.

The things wherein they are agreed are these.

1. That an *Officious lye* is but a *venial sin*. This they do not stick to declare to be the common opinion of all their Divines. *Ex communi omnium sententiâ*, saith Azorius, *A lye that hurts no body, but is intended for the good of others is no mortal sin; and herein all are agreed*, saith Reginaldus; because, say they, where there is no other fault but the mere falsity, it is not of its own nature and kind any mortal sin; for a lye of it self is a harmless thing, or at least, saith Lessius, *the hurt is not great that it doth, and it is no great matter whether men be deceived or not, if they do not suffer much by it*; and from hence he concludes it to be *venial in its own nature*. It is true, they say an *officious lye* may become a *mortal sin by accident*, when it is confirmed by an oath, when it is

Azor. Inst. Moral. par. 3. l. 13. c. 1. dub. 2. Reginald. prag. l. 24. sect. 5. n. 13.

Less. de just. & jure. l. 2. c. 47. dub. 6. n. 40.

too publick and scandalous, and used by those from whom the people expect Truth, as Bishops and Preachers and Religious men, saith Sayr. Not even in them, saith Navarr. Navarr, unless the scandal be great, or their consciences tell them they are mortal sins; or some other circumstances make it to. If it be in matter of judicature, although the thing be small, yet I think a lye a mortal sin, saith Cajetan, because men are then bound to speak truth. That reason is of no force at all, say Soto and Navarr, for that circumstance alone doth not alter the nature of the sin. So that if a man tells never so many lyes, provided he intend to hurt no body by them, they do not make one mortal sin. For that is a fixed rule among the *Casuits*, that an infinite number of venial sins do not amount to one mortal; and consequently though they have obliquity in them, yet they do not put a man out of the Favour of God. But upon these principles what security have men to invent and spread abroad lyes, provided they are intended for a good end in their own opinion? What sincerity is to be expected, when the confessing a truth may do them injury; and the telling a lye may do them good? for even Cajetan himself

Sayr Clav.

Reg. l. 11.

c. 3. n. 18.

Navarr.

Man. c. 18.

n. 3.

Cajet. in 2.

2. qu. 69.

art. 1.

Soto de rat.

tegeudi se-

cret memb.

2. qu. 6.

Navarr. ubi

supr.

BassaTheol.

pract. v.

peccat. 1 n.

3.8. Bell. de

omiss grat.

Et stat. pec-

cati, l. 1. c.

13.

Cajet in 2.

2. q. 110.

art. 4.

himself makes that only a pernicious lye, when *a man designs to do mischief by it.* They cry out upon it as a great scandal for any of us to say, *they think it lawfull to lye for the Catholick cause;* and in truth they do not say so in words; for they still say, *a lye is unlawfull for any end whatsoever;* but here lies the subtilty of it; They grant it in general to be a fault, but such a venial, such an inconsiderable fault, if it be for a good end; and they have so many ways to expiate the guilt of venial sins; that the difference is very little as to the practice of it, from making it no sin at all. And some think they had better own down-right lying, than make use of such absurd ways of evading it by mental reservations; by which men may be truly said to affirm that which they do deny, and to deny that which they do affirm. But notwithstanding this,

*Grot. de ju-
re belli &
pacis l. 3.
c. 1. n. 17.*

2. They are agreed, that *in some cases*, that which otherwise would be a lye, is none by the help of a *mental reservation.* Let us not therefore do the *Jesuits* so much injury to charge that upon them as their peculiar doctrine, which is common to all their Divines

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and

Treatise
tending to
Mitigati-
on, c. 7.
Self. 2, 3.

C. 10. Self. 1.

and Casuists. And herein *F. Parsons* was in the right, when he asserted, that *the doctrine of Equivocation and mental reservation hath been received in the Roman Church for four hundred years*: only some have extended the practice of it farther than others have done. But in the Case of Confession they all agree without exception, saith the same Author, that if a man hath confessed a thing to a Priest, he may deny and swear that he never confessed it, without being guilty either of a lye or perjury; reserving this in his mind, that he hath not confessed it so as to utter it to another. And I find the greatest enemies to the use of *Mental reservation* in other cases, do allow it in this; and do not barely allow it, but think a man bound in conscience to use it, under grievous sin, saith *Parsons*, when by no other means of silence, diversion, or evasion the said secrecie can be concealed. I do not now meddle with the inviolableness of the Seal of Confession, which I do not deny a great regard ought to be had to (where an obligation greater than that of keeping a secret doth not take it off, as where

Genes. Sepulveda de rat. dicendi testim. c. 3. Barnes c. Equiv. Self. 28. n. 4. p. 255. Hurado resolut. moral. p. 449. Caramu. de restrict. mental. art. 13. p. 360. Steph à Sancto Paulo Theol. Moral. tr. 5. disp. 5. dub. 7. Self. 3. n. 232.

where the life of my Prince or the public safety are concerned) not from any divine Institution, but from the baseness of betraying a Trust: but I wonder how they came to think it to be *no lye* or *perjury* in this *Case*, and yet to be so in any other? It is to no purpose to alledge other Reasons peculiar to this *Case*, for the single question is, whether what a man keeps in his mind, can keep him from being guilty of a *lye*, or of *perjury* in his words? If it cannot, then not in the *case* of *Confession*; if it may, then a mental reservation will equally do it in any other *Case*. And consequently no man who doth allow it in this *case*, can on that account disallow it in any other.

This *Navarr* very well saw, and therefore from the allowance of it in this *Case* of *Confession* he deduces the lawfulness of the use of it in all cases wherein a man is not bound to speak all he knows. The common answer in this *case* is, *That in confession the Priest doth not know as man but as God; and therefore when he is asked any thing as a man he may deny what he knows as God.* But

Quare omnes qui fatentur quod Confessarius vèrè dicere potest, Ille hoc non est mihi confessus; subintelligendo ita ut se neque proderet; coguntur profectò confiteri quod

T 2

Navarr

etiam alius quilibet qui non tenetur aliquid dicere, verè poterit respondere illud sibi non esse dictum, subintelligendo non esse ita ei dictum, ut teneatur id prodere Cum igitur omnes confiteantur illud, nemo debet hoc negare. Nav. ib. n. 8.

Navarr at large shews the folly and absurdity of this Answer, because this doth not save the contradiction, for to say *he doth not know* is as much as to say he doth not any way know it; which is false if he doth know it in

any capacity: and it is false that he doth not know it *as man*, because he knows it as a *Priest*, and as such he is not *God* but *Man*. And the very *Seal of Confession* discovers that it is made known to him *as a Man*, and with the consent of the penitent a Priest may reveal what he heard in confession; and in other cases he may make use of that knowledge *as a man*, without particular discovery. I do not therefore wonder to see the stout and plain-hearted defenders of the lawfulness of this practice in other cases, to express so much astonishment at the nicety and scrupulosity of those, who dispute against it as so dangerous and pernicious a thing upon other occasions, when they think it so pious and innocent in this. For, say

Si enim est mendacium inficiari quod

they, *If it be a lye to deny what a man knows, it is not in the power of the Church or of God himself for any end whatsoever*

to make it lawfull for a Priest to deny ^{noveris,}
what he knows. And if it be not a lye in ^{non est in}
that Case, neither is it in any other. ^{Ecclesia,}
^{imò neque}
^{in ipsius}
Dei potestate, quocunque tandem ex sine efficere, ut Sacerdos licitè in-
ficietur quæ novit. Emoner. Splendor verit. Moral. c. Barnes. c.
16. n. 3.

But although none in the *Roman Church* are able to answer that argument, yet I must do some of them that Justice, as to clear them from the owning the allowance of this practice in other common cases upon the same ground. Yet I fear upon strict enquiry we shall find that those do equivocate more who seem to deny it, than those who openly assert it. For, although two persons of the *Roman Church* seem wholly to reject it, except in the case of *Confession*; yet the *a* one of them is charged with † singularity and suspicion of Heresie, and the *b* other with little less than Heresie and Apostasie; and their proceedings with him shew what esteem they had of him *c*. But most of their

a Genes. Sepulveda de
rat. dicendi Testimon.

† Emoner. c. 13. p. 241.

b Barnes c. Equivoc

* V. Theophil. Rayn.
sive Emonerium adit.
ad Disput. n. 4, 5, 6.

c After Fa. Barnes had
written his Book against
Equivocation, and other-
ways provoked the Je-

suits, by order of the Pope, and by means of *Albertus* he was seized on, and carried to *Rome*, and there died mad in the Inquisition.
V. Leodegar. Quintin. Hæduum advers. Th. Hurtado p. 71. where
the Jesuit relates the story.

T 3

other

other Divines and Casuists do approve it in case of *Testimony* and *Accusation*. Soto doth allow a Witness being examined about a secret crime to say, *he doth not know any thing of it*, although he were privy to it: and for this he quotes some Divines of great Authority before him; as he might have done many others: but he will not allow him to say,

Soto de rat. teg. secretes.
memb. 3. qu. 3. concl. 4.
Adrian. 6. quod l. 11.
ad 2. princip. C. G. Syl-
vest. v. Juram.

He did not see the fact committed, nor that he heard nothing of it, because, saith he, words of knowledge seem to be restrained by judicial proceed-

ings to that which a man is bound to declare. But this subtilty the latter Casuists will by no means admit of, and allow denying the fact in any words; and

Cosm. Philiarclus de
Offic. Sacerd. t. 1. p. 2. l.
3. c. 14.

Navar. ubi supra n. 9.
Sayr. Clav. Reg. l. 12.
c. 17. n. 24.

say of him, *that he was afraid where no fear was.* They therefore say, it is enough that a witness answers to what ought to have been the intention of the Judge, what-

Suarez de
juram. l. 3.
c. 10. n. 3.

ever his actual intention was; and therefore if a man supposes the Judge not to proceed legally against him, he may not only deny the fact he knows, but swear to that denial, provided he keeps this in his mind that he denied any such fact

*fact which belonged to the Judges conufance; or that he did not do it publickly, * and * Mich de Palacio in 4. d. 21. disp. 2. Testis verè*

dicat Nescio quum verè sciat, quia testis non tenetur respondere Judici secundum suam iniquitatem, sed secundum id quod potest ut Iudex, & secundum mentem quam debet habere, etiamsi illam non habeat. Mich. Salon. 2. 2. q. 69. art. 2. controu. 11.

Others say, no more is necessary to avoid a lye, or perjury in such cases, but only to understand the word of denial with this restriction *so as to be bound to tell you.*

And this is the common case which *Parsons* and others speak of. If a man be examined upon oath *whether he be a Priest or not*, they say, he may with a safe conscience deny it with that poor reservation in his mind; and that is a known rule in this case among them *that what a man may truly say, he may truly swear.* So that a Priest may not only say, but swear he is none, and yet by this admirable art neither tell a lye, nor forswear himself.

Quando igitur reus negat se crimen fecisse, id in animo habere debet, ut negat se non commississe tale crimen de quo Iudex interrogare debeat. Et idem est dicere, non feci hoc crimen, ac si diceret non publicè feci, quod verum est. Et cum hac responsio sit vera, nullum erit peccatum, etiamsi intercedat iuramentum. Lud. Carbo tr. de restit. q. 19. cons. 8.

Quamvis regulariter adjuratus respondere debeat adjuranti juxta mentem ejus, fallit tamen ea doctrina, quando alia mente quam debet adjuratur; tunc enim sufficit ut respondeat verum secundum mentem & intentionem suam, li-

set falsum sit secundum mentem interrogantis, & adjurantis. Greg. Sayr Claru Reg. l. 12. c. 17. n. 21, &c.

Parson's Treatise of Mitigation, c. 8. n. 20. 51, 57. c. 9. n. 2.

Some of later times being made sensible of the pernicious consequences of the imputation of such doctrines and practices to their Church have endeavoured to qualify and restrain the Abuse of them. But upon due examination we shall find this to be only a greater art to avoid the *odium* of these things, and a design to deceive us with a greater fineness. For they allow the same words to be said either in *Oaths* or *Testimonies*, i. e. a plain denial of what they know to be true, but only differ from the other as to the way of excusing such a denial from being a lye: which say they, *depends on the circumstances of denying, and not upon the reservation of the mind.* So *Malderus* himself grants, that a guilty person being examined upon a capital Offence, may deny the fact with this reservation, *so as to be bound to tell it*; but then he saith, *the circumstances give that sense and not the reservation in his mind.* But saith *Emmerius* (or rather a famous Jesuit under that name) *these circumstances only limit the words to such a sense which they cannot*

*Malder.
de abusu
reserie.
mental c.
10. Sect. 1.
p. 64.*

*Emmer.
splend. va-
rit. moral.
9. 16.*

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not otherwise bear, because in such circumstances a man is not bound to declare what he knows, therefore, saith he, where-ever there is a reasonable cause of concealing what a mans knows, such mental reservations are to be understood, and so there is the same liberty allowed in practice.

Among the late Casuists none hath seemed to have written with more pomp and vanity against *mental Restrictions* than Caramuel; yet he not only allows a *Confessour* to deny upon oath what he heard in *Confession*; but in case of *secret Murder* that a man may with a good conscience deny the Fact, tho' the Judge be competent and proceed according to due form of Law. What way can this be excused from a lye, since he saith, a *mental reservation* will not do it? He hath a fetch beyond this. A Judge is only to proceed upon evidence; if there be no sufficient evidence against him, he may persist in denying it, because it cannot be fully proved, and therefore his denial, saith he, is of such a fact which he can proceed upon, and what cannot be proved is none in Law. These are

Caramuel
Haplotes
sive de re-
strict. men.
tal. art. 13.
p. 360.

Quod igitur plenè probari non potest, infectum civiliter & virtualiter est, hoc est prudentium iudicio & affirmatione ita se habet, ac si factum non esset. At quæ facta non sunt negari possunt; ergo etiam quæ secretò sunt facta. Caram. p. 362.

the

the shifts of those who seem most to oppose the Jesuitical art of *Equivocation*; and inveigh bitterly against it, as a thing wholly repugnant to the Truth of our words and the sincerity of our minds, and that Candour and Simplicity which ought to be in Christians.

But in my apprehension they had altogether as good take up with the dull way of lying, or with the common artifice of equivocation and mental reservation, as make use of such refinings as these.

But however, we gain this considerable advantage by them, that they do assure us, that mental reservations are so far from excusing the words spoken from being a lye, that they contain a *premeditated lye*; and so the sin is the more aggravated by them; that all such propositions are in themselves false, and designed only to deceive others, and so all the effect and consequence of lying follow them; that there is nothing so false but may be made true, nothing so true but may be made false by this means.

Caramuel gives a remarkable instance of this kind in some of the Articles of the

*Cajet. in 2.
2. qu. 89.
art. 7. ad 4.*

Imò illa ipsa sua restrictione convincitur non precipitanter fuisse mentitus, sed quodammodo meditatus fuisse mendacium quod gravitatem peccati auget.

Malder. de abusu restr. ment. c. 10. Sect. 2. p. 70.

Ut quidvis licet falsissimum verum fieri possit restrictione sola mentali. Id. p. 28. Caramuel. ib. art. 2. concl. 4. p. 28.

Creed;

Creed; for by this way of *mental reservation* a man might truly say, *Christ was not born*, understanding it secretly, at Constantinople. *He did not suffer*, viz. at Paris. *He was not buried*, viz. in Persia. *He did not rise again*, viz. in Japan. *Nor ascended into Heaven*, viz. from America: so that by this blessed Art, the most abominable Heresies may be true doctrine; and the most cursed lyes prove precious Truths.

Besides, they confess that *it takes away all confidence in mens words, and destroys all sincerity of conversation, and the very inclination to speak*

Truth: For as *Malderus* well observes, *there is no reason men should not have the same liberty in private conversation which is allowed*

Th. Alb. Stat. Morum
Tom. 1. p. 172. Malder.
p. 24. Azor. Infit. Mo-
ral. p. 1. l. 11. c. 4.
Layman. Theol. Mor. l.
4. ir. 3. c. 13. n. 6, 7.

them before an incompetent Judge: and some *Jesuites* themselves grant, *that if the common use of it be allowed, there can be no security as to mens words, there being nothing so false but it may be made true in this way*. And no man can be charged with a lye till they know his heart; nor the *Devil* himself in all his *lying Oracles*; who surely had wit enough to make some secret reservation; and a very

Suarez de
Rel. Th. 2.
l. 3. c. 10.
n. 4.

very little will serve for that according to Suarez, who saith, *it is enough in the general, that a man intend to affirm or deny in some true sense*; although he know not what.

Since from their own Authors, we thus far understand the mischievous consequence of these practices, it will not be amiss to set down briefly the cases, wherein they are commonly allowed.

Less. de ja-
stis & ju-
re l. 2. c.
42. dub. 9.
n. 47.

1. In general, *Where-ever there is a just and reasonable Cause for concealing of Truth.* For that is the most general rule they give in this case; where a man is not bound to speak his whole mind, he may utter one half, and reserve the other half of one entire proposition. Now a *just and reasonable Cause* with them is *declining of danger, or obtaining any advantage to themselves either as to body, honour, or estate.* In all such Cases, they allow that a man

Potest ali-
quis jurare
simpliciter
falsum ad-
dendo ali-

may speak what is simply false and swear to it too, provided that he hold something in his mind which makes it true. But if a
quid mente, ex quo juramentum sit verum quoties intervenit justa causa. Justa causa esse potest necessitas, vel utilitas ad salutem corporis, honoris, rerum familiarium, vel etiam quando injusta interrogatio proponitur. Dian. part. 3. tr. 6. resol. 30.

man

man happen to do it without *just cause*, what then? doth he lye? doth he forswear himself? by no means. *But he is guilty of Indiscretion*: and is that all? then they tell him for his comfort, *that an oath that wants only discretion is no mortal sin.*

Sed juramentum cum deficit sola discretio, non est peccatum mortale.

Sanch. in

sum. tom. 1. l. 3 c. 6. n. 22. aliique.

2. If a man be barred the use of *Equivocation*, or *mental reservation*, that doth not hinder the using it, even in renouncing *equivocation*. Even Soto himself saith, *that if a Magistrate requires from a person to speak simply all he knows of such a matter; i. e. without any reservation; a man may still answer he knows nothing of it; i. e. with this reservation, to tell him.* But what if in particular, saith he, he asks about a secret Murder; whether Peter killed John, which he alone saw, doth it not seem to be a lye for him to say, he knows nothing of it? No, saith he; for still the meaning is, so as he is bound to tell. F. Parsons speaks home to this point; Suppose, saith he, a Judge asks a man whether he doth equivocate or not? He may answer, Not, but with another equivocation. But if he still suspects he equivocates, what then is to be done;

*Soto de ration. se-
gend. se-
cret. memb.
3. q. 3.
concl. 4.*

*V. Barns c.
Equivoca-
cat. Sect.
20. n. 3.
p. 174.
Sect. 12.
n. 7.*

done; he may deny it with another equivocation; and so, toties quoties, as often as he asks, the other may deny and still with a farther equivocation. Suppose a Priest, saith Jacob. à Grassius, be asked a thing he heard in confession, may he deny that he knew it? Tes saith he, and swear it too; because he knew it not as man. But suppose he be asked whether he knew it not as man, but as God? He may deny it still, with another equivocation, i. e. not as God himself, but as his Minister.

Jac. de
Grassius de-
cis. aurea
l. 1. c. 23.
n. 3.

Quando
quis inique
interrogat,
excludendo
omnem a-
equivocati-
onem, posse
interroga-
tum uti a-
quivocatio-
ne appo-
nendo ali-

quam particulam in mente, per quam verum efficiatur juramentum.
Bonacina To. 2. disp. 4. q. 1. punct. 12. n. 5.

3. If a man be charged with a *secret crime*, which cannot be sufficiently proved by Testimonies beyond all exception, he may safely deny it, tho' he were guilty of it. If a man, saith Lessius, can

Less. de ju-
stit. & ju-
re, l. 2. c.
31. dub. 3.
n. 8.

make any exception against the Witnesses, or shew that it was a report spread abroad

by

by men, that bore ill-will to him, or that there was some mistake in it, he is not bound to confess the truth, and consequently he may deny it with a reservation. Nay, as long as the thing is so secret, that a man may probably defend himself, and hope to escape, he may persist in denying the fact; although the Judge do proceed according to due Form of Law, saith the same Lessius. It is no mortal sin to deny it, saith Filliucius. Not, tho' others be like to suffer for it, saith Em. Sà; especially if the punishment be capital, saith Filliucius and others in him. But if a man doth suspect whether the Judge doth proceed according to due form of Law, which depends upon his opinion of the proofs and Witnesses brought against him, they make no question then, but he may deny the fact by help of an easie reservation in his mind.

4. If a man hath denied the Fact when he was bound to confess it in Court, according to their rules, yet they will not allow that he is bound to confess it before execution. Because, saith Navarr, confession to a Priest and

Dian. Sum. v. Reus n. 12. Jac. de Graffis, l. 3. c. 7. n. 17. Escobar, tr. 6. ex. 6. n. 62. Azor. p. 3. l. 13. c. 25. dub. 5. Sayr. Clarv. Reg. l. 12. c. 17. Layman. l. 3. tr. 6. c. 5. n. 3. Sà Aphor. de Reo. n. 5. Bass. reus p. 5. n. 15.

absol-

*absolution by him is sufficient for salvation, his Confessour ought not to put him upon it, saith Diana. Not unless it be clearer than Noon-day that the Law compels them to it, say others; i. e. that they have no kind of exceptions again the judicial proceedings. Some thought they ought then to do it for the reputation of the Judges who otherwise might suffer in the esteem of the People as condemning innocent persons; but this is over-ruled by the generality of the later Casuists, because the presumption is always on the side of the Judges, when they proceed according to Law. But one of the latest Casuists hath given an excellent Reason against * publick Confession, because they are accounted Cowards and Fools that make it.*

*Lugo de
Justit. &
jure Tom 2.
Disp. 40.*

*Secf. 1. n. 19. * Imo pusillanimes & stulti habentur si ea fateantur.
Di castillo de juramento disp. 2. dub. 12. n. 3/7.*

5. Where the Judge is supposed *incompetent*, they make no question of the use of *Equivocation* and *mental reservation* in denying the crimes they are guilty of. An *incompetent Judge* is one that wants lawfull jurisdiction over the person; as if a *Lay man* pretend to judge
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one in Orders according to their doctrine of exemption; or if a *Heretick* or *excommunicated Person* take upon him to judge good Catholics.

And thus they look on all our Judges as *incompetent*; of which, besides the general charge of *Heresie*, we have this particular evidence. When the unquietness of the *Jesuites* gave just occasion to those severe Laws which were made after the *Bull* of *Pius V.* several cases were proposed at *Rome* for Resolution in order to the better conduct of their affairs here; and among the rest this, Suppose an oath be required in an *Heretical Court* before *incompetent Judges* (quales sunt omnes nunc in Anglia, as all are now in England) how far doth such an oath bind? The Answer is, no farther than the Person that swears did intend it should: and he may either refuse the oath, or he may *Sophisticè* jurare & *Sophisticè* respondere: he may swear and answer with juggling and equivocation: and he that discovers any by virtue of his oath commits a double sin. And in the Answers approved by *Pius V.* our Judges are declared *incompetent*, and our Courts of Judicature *unlawfull Courts*; and therefore no man by his oath is bound

G. Abbot.
de Mendac.
p. 41, 42.
C. in pras.
p. 9. &c.

to confess any thing to the prejudice of the Catholick Cause; nor to answer according to the intention of the Judge, but in some true sense of his own.

So that we not only see the doctrine and practice of equivocation approved by the *Holy See*, but all *legal Authority* among us utterly rejected as having no *jurisdiction* over them. And all who allow this practice do thereby discover that what they call *Herésie* doth take away the civil *Rights and Properties* of men. For if *Herésie* makes our *Judges incompetent*, by necessary consequence it must deprive the *King* of the right to his *Throne*, it must take away all the obligation of our *Laws*, and the title every man hath to his estate. Such pernicious consequences do follow the *wisdom of the Serpent*, where it is not joyned with the *innocence and simplicity* of the *Dove*: and not only pernicious to *Government*, but to *themselves* too when these arts are understood and discovered; for what security can there be from the most solemn oaths, the most deep and serious protestations of those persons who at the same time believe that none of these things do bind them, but by some secret reserve they may turn the

the sense quite another way than we
 imagined, and when they pretend the
 greatest *simplicity* and seem to renounce
 all *equivocation*, may then *equivocate* the
 most of all? If men had invented ways
 to fill the world with perpetual jealous-
 ies and suspicions of their practices
 and intentions, they could never have
 thought of any more effectual than these
 two, that *Herésie*, or differing in opi-
 nion from them, deprives them of their
 civil rights, and that they may deny
 what is true, and swear to what is false,
 and promise what they never mean to
 perform by vertue of some secret réser-
 vation in their minds. How can they
 live as fellow-subjects with others who
 do not own the same Authority, the
 same Laws, the same Magistrates, who
 look on all *Hereticks* in a *State of U-*
surpation, and all judicial proceedings
 against them as meer force and violence,
 and parallel the case of answering in
 our Courts with that of oaths and promi-
 ses to *Thieves* and *Robbers*? for upon
 these grounds all the bonds of Society
 are dissolved where what they call *He-*
resie prevails; and no obligation can
 lie upon them by vertue of any *Laws*,
 or oaths, or promises. I do not say
 that

*Molan. de
 fide haret.
 serv. l. 4.
 c. 8.*

that particular persons may not, upon common principles of honesty, make conscience of these things: but I speak of what follows from these allowed principles and practices among them, and what may be justly expected by vertue of them. How can we be sure that any man means what he saith, when he holds it lawfull to reserve a meaning quite different from his words? What can oaths signifie to the satisfaction of others; when it is impossible to understand in what sense they swear: and when they pretend the greatest simplicity in renouncing all arts, may then by allowance of their *Casuits* use them the most of all? But can men upon sober reflections think it any part of *true Wisdom* to lose all the force of their *oaths* and *promises* with those among whom they live? Will they never stand in need of being believed or trusted? And then, if they desire it never so much, how can they recover any credit without plain disowning all such principles, and in such a way if such can be found out, which is incapable of any mental reservation. Such kind of Artifices can only serve for a time, but when once they are thoroughly understood

*Barns de
Equivoca-
cat. Sect.
23. n. 2.
p. 194.*

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stood, they fall heavily upon those that use them. For although frost and fraud may hold for a while, yet according to the true saying, they both have dirty ends. The summ of what I have to say is this, That however *Simplicity* and *sincerity* of *conversation* may in some particular circumstances expose men to greater danger and difficulties than fraud and deceit may do; yet upon the whole matter considering the consequences of both, it will be found much greater *Wisdom* always to preserve the *innocency* of the *Dove*, than to use the greatest *subtily* of the *Serpent* without it. Which although it may seem to take off from the *fineness* of the *Serpents Wisdom*, yet it adds very much to the *safety* and *soundness* of it.

III. Prudent simplicity lies in the practice of *Meekness* and *Patience*. The *Serpent* doth not imploy its subtilty only in defending it self and avoiding dangers, but in watching its opportunity to do mischief, * being both revenge-
* *Arist. hist. Anim. l. 1. c. 1.*
 full and insidious: therefore we read of
Gen. 49. 17.
*the Adder in the path that lies undiscerned in the sands, that biteth the horse-
 beels so that the rider shall fall backward.*

Rom. 16.
19.

It doth mischief secretly, spitefully and artificially, by fit means and instruments. But Christ would have his Disciples to be *Wise to that which is good, but simple or harmless concerning evil*; so S. Paul explains these words of our Saviour, *Be ye wise as Serpents and harmless as Doves*. Which although they want no Gall, yet do not shew that they have any, whatsoever usage they meet with. Christ foretels his Disciples the injuries and reproaches they were like to suffer under, that their condition was like to be no better than that of *sheep in the midst of Wolves*; notwithstanding he would not suffer them to be furious as wild Beasts, or cruel and rapacious as the Birds of prey; but in gentleness and meekness and patience to be as *harmless as Doves*. Nor, as though Christianity did forbid men the just and lawfull ways of preserving themselves, but it takes away all malice and hatred and revenge and cruelty out of men's minds; it softens and sweetens and calms the tempers of men, and fills them with Kindness and Goodwill even to their enemies, *not being overcome with evil, but overcoming evil with good*. Never any Religion in the world

Matt. 5.
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Rom. 12.
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world was such an enemy to all kind of Malice, Revenge and Cruelty as the Christian; that which we call *good nature* seems to come very near that Divine grace which S. Paul calls *Charity*, and doth so admirably describe and so highly extol above miraculous gifts and some of the greatest graces. *Charity* 1 Cor. 13.
suffereth long and is kind; charity envi- 4, 5, 6, 7.
eth not; charity vaunteth not it self; is
not puffed up; doth not behave it self un-
seemly; seeketh not her own; is not easi-
ly provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoyceth
not in iniquity but rejoyceth in the truth;
beareth all things, believeth all things,
hopeth all things, endureth all things, i.e.
in short, it hopes, believes, and does the greatest good; it modestly bears and heartily forgives the greatest evil. And herein consists that *Dove-like temper*, which Christ would have his Disciples remarkable for. Which however it may be despised and scorned by furious and self-willed men, yet upon consideration it will be found a great part of the *Wisdom of living*. Revenge is the pleasure only of weak and disorderly minds: for what real satisfaction can anothers loss or pain give to any considering man? The only pretence or

colour for it is the preventing more mischief coming on ones self; and yet every act of revenge is a fresh provocation; so that either quarrels must continue without end, or some body must think it their Wisdom to forgive at last. And if so, I appeal to any man's understanding whether it were not greater Wisdom to have prevented at first all the vexation and disquiet, besides other inconveniencies, which must needs follow a continued quarrel. If any thing tend to make a man's life easie and pleasant to himself and others, it is innocency and gentleness, and patience, and doing good and vertuous things, whatever the world thinks of them.

And this was it which recommended the *Christian Religion* to the World, that its great business and design was, to

Luke 1: 17. perswade the *disobedient to the Wisdom*
 1 Pet. 2: 1. *of the just; by laying aside all malice,*
 3: 9 *and all guile, and hypocrisies, and all evil*
 2: 20, *speaking; not rendring evil for evil, or*
 21, *railing for railing; and if when they did*
 22, *well they suffered for it, by taking it pa-*
 23, *tiently; following therein the example of*
Christ himself, who did no sin, neither was
guile found in his mouth; who when he
was reviled, reviled not again; when he
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suffered, he threatned not, but committed himself to him that judged righteously. These are the instructions of S. Peter to the primitive *Christians*, and the ways he judged most effectual to promote the honour of their Religion, among those who were most apt to think and speak evil of it. And because that was a very corrupt and a busie and factious age, especially in those Cities where the *Jews* and *Gentiles* inhabited together; therefore he adviseth the *Christians* not only to purity and innocency, but to a quiet submission to Authority, and however the *Jews* looked on *Heathen Government* as a meer appointment of men; yet he commands them to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it was the Imperial, the Proconsular, or the Prætorian power, not considering so much the Persons imploy'd, as the design of the Institution, which was for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the Will of God, that with this sort of well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, who are apt to quarrel with Religion, especially when it appears new, as that which gives occasion to many disturbances of the Civil Government.

2. IT, 12.

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ment. And that there might be no colour for any such cavil against *Christianity*, no Religion that ever was, did so much inforce the duty of obedience as *Christ* and his *Apostles* did, and that upon the greatest and most weighty considerations, *for conscience sake, for the Lord's sake*, for their Religions sake. For, consider I pray, if the Doctrine of *Christ* had given encouragement to faction and rebellion under pretence of it, if *S. Peter* himself had taken upon him to dispose of Crowns and Scepters, or had *absolved Christians from their Allegiance*, even to their greatest persecutors, what a blot this had been upon the whole Religion, such as all the *blood* of the *Martyrs* could never have washed off. For it would have made the condition of *Princes* more precarious, and the duty of *Subjects* more loose and uncertain, and all Nations that regarded their own peace and safety shy of entertaining a Doctrine which would give so much countenance to Rebellion. And yet among all the causes alledged for the persecution of *Christians*, this was never once suggested, which would not have been omitted (if any such thing had been owned by the *Christians*) by persons

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persons so jealous of their Power, as the *Roman Emperours* were. It is an intolerable reproach to Christianity to impute their patient submission to Authority to their *weakness and want of force*: which is all one as to say, they would have resisted if they durst: this is not to make them *harmless as Doves*, but to have too much of the *subtily* of the *Serpent*, in pretending to be innocent when they only wanted an opportunity to do mischief.

*Bell. de
Rom. Pont.
l. 5. c. 7.*

But the security the *Christian Religion* gave to *Government* was from the principles and precepts of it, the design of its Doctrine as well as the practice of its followers. So that if their Religion were true, it did oblige them to all acts of charity and kindness, to meekness and patience, to peaceableness and a quiet and prudent behaviour in all the changes of humane affairs.

From what hath been already said, it is no hard matter to understand the *Reason* why our *Saviour* gave such directions to his *Apostles*, and made choice of such means to promote his *Religion*; because they would hereby see, that he sent not his *Apostles* upon any ambitious or secular design, not to disturb Govern-

Governments upon pretence of setting up a new *Monarchy* in it either of *Christ* or his pretended *Vicar*; but to prepare men for another World *by the Love of God and our Neighbour*, by subduing our lusts and taking off our affections from present things; and because he knew what persecutions would follow his Doctrine, he adviseth his Disciples neither to suffer as *Fools*, nor as *evil-doers*, but *to be wise as Serpents and harmless as Doves*.

Let no man then think our Religion weakens their understanding, or impairs their discretion, or puts men upon doing foolish and imprudent things. As it is founded on the best reason, so it brings men to the best temper, and governs their actions by rules of the truest Wisdom; not only as it provides for the most desirable end in another world, but even in this, it secures most the honour, interest and safety of men; and if circumstances happen to be hard here, it gives the highest assurance of an infinite and eternal recompence. But if men under a pretence of zeal for Religion do wicked things, and carry on treacherous and malicious designs, if instead of directing men's Consciences in the

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the ways of innocence and goodness, they teach them the art of *putting tricks on God Almighty*, (as one called the *Casuistical Divinity* of the *Jesuites*) or the way of breaking his Laws by certain *shifts* and *evasions* ; if instead of meekness and patience they put men upon acts of revenge and cruelty ; if instead of promoting peace and tranquillity in the world, they plot mischief and stir up faction and rebellion, we are sure whose Disciples soever they pretend to be, they are none of Christ's ; for although they should not all be capable of being *wise as Serpents*, yet they are bound to be *harmless as Doves*.

Nicol. Faber apud Wendrock. in Epist. Provinc. 8. Not. 3.

SERMON VI.
OF THE
Mischief of Separation,
Preached at
Guild-Hall Chapel
Before the
LORD MAYOR, &c.

Phil. III. 16.

Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same things.

Although the *Christian Religion* doth lay the greatest obligations on mankind to *Peace* and *Unity*, by the strictest commands, the highest exam-

examples, and the most prevailing arguments; yet so much have the passions and interests of men overway'd the sense of their duty, that as nothing ought to be more in our *wishes*, so nothing seems more remote from our *hopes*, than the *Universal Peace* of the *Christian World*. Not that there is any impossibility in the thing, or any considerable difficulty, if all men were such Christians as they ought to be; but as long as men pursue their several factions and designs under the colour and pretence of zeal for Religion; if they did not find Names and Parties ready framed, that were suitable to their ends, the difference of their designs would make them. So that till mens corruptions are mortified, and their passions subdued to a greater degree than the world hath yet found them, it is in vain to expect a state of peace and tranquillity in the Church. We need not go far from home for a sufficient evidence of this; for although our differences are such as the wiser Protestants abroad not only condemn but wonder at them; yet it hath hitherto puzzled the wisest persons among us to find out ways to compose them; not so much
from

Judges 5.
15, 16.

from the distance of mens opinions and practices, as the strength of their prejudices and inclinations. What those *divisions of Reuben* of old were, which caused *such thoughts and searchings of heart*, we neither well understand, nor doth it much concern us: but the continuance, if not the widening of the unhappy breaches among our selves do give just cause for many sad reflections. When neither the miseries we have felt, nor the calamities we fear; neither the terrible judgments of God upon us, nor the unexpected deliverances vouchsafed to us, nor the common danger we are yet in, have abated mens heats, or allayed their passions, or made them more willing to unite with our established Church and Religion. But instead of that, some rather stand at a great distance if not defiance, and seem to entertain themselves with hopes of new revolutions; others raise fresh calumnies and reproaches, as well as revive and spread abroad old ones; as though their business were to make our breaches wider, and to exasperate mens spirits against each other; at such a time, when Reason and common security, and above all our Religion obliges us *to fol-*
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low after the things that make for peace, Rom. 14. 19.
and things wherewith one may edifie ano-
ther ; and not such as tend to our mu-
tual destruction ; as most certainly our
divisions and animosities do. Yet all
parties pretend to a zeal for Peace, to
they may have it in their own way: by
which it appears that it is not Peace they
aim at, but Victory ; nor Unity so
much as having their own wills. Those
of the Roman Church make great boasts
of their Unity and the effectual means
they have to preserve it ; but God deli-
ver us from such cruel ways of Peace,
and such destructive means of Unity as
Treachery and Assassinations, and an
Inquisition. Their feet are swift to shed Rom. 3. 15,
blood ; destruction and misery are in their 16, 17.
ways ; and the way of peace they have not
known. But it were happy for us, if all
those who agree in renouncing the Er-
rors and Corruptions of the Roman
Church, could as easily joyn together
in the great duties of our common Reli-
gion, that is, in our Prayers, and Prai-
ses, and Sacraments, and all solemn
acts of Divine Worship. For this would
not only take off the reproach of our
Adversaries, who continually upbraid
us with our Schisms and Separations,

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but it would mightily tend to abate mens passions, and to remove their prejudices, and to dispose their inclinations, and thereby lay a foundation for a blessed Union among our selves, which would frustrate the great design of our enemies upon us, who expect to see that Religion destroyed by our own folly, which they could not otherwise hope to accomplish by their utmost care and endeavour. And we may justly hope for a greater blessing of God upon us, when we offer up our joint Prayers and Devotions to him, *lifting up*, as St. Paul speaks, *holy hands without wrath and disputing*. This is therefore a thing of so great consequence to our Peace and Union, that tends so much to the Honour of God, and our common Safety and Preservation; that no person who hath any real concernment for these things, can deny it to be not onely just and fitting, but in our circumstances necessary to be done, if it can be made appear to be lawfull, or that they can do it with a good Conscience.

And this is the subject I design to speak to at this time; and for that purpose have made choice of these words of the Apostle, *Nevertheless whereto*

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we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same things.

For our better understanding the full scope and meaning of the Apostle in these words, we are to consider, that an unhappy Schism, or willfull breach of the Churches Unity, had begun in the Apostles times, upon the difference that arose concerning the necessity of keeping the Law of *Moses*. And that which made the *Schism* the more dangerous, was, that the first beginners of it pretended a Commission from the Apostles themselves at *Jerusalem*, and were extremely busie and industrious to gain and keep up a party to themselves in the most flourishing Churches planted by the Apostles. At *Antioch* they bore so great a sway, that *St. Peter* himself complied with them, and not only Gal. 2. 12, *other Jews, but Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.* 13- Insomuch that had it not been for the courage and resolution of *St. Paul*, all the Gentile Christians had been either forced to a compliance with the Jews, or to a perpetual Schism, (of which *St. Peter* had been in probability the *Head*, and not of the Churches Unity, if *St. Paul* had

not vigorously opposed so dangerous a compliance.) But finding so good success in his endeavours at *Antioch*, he pursues those false Apostles, who made it their business to divide and separate the Christians from each others Communion, through all the Churches where they had, or were like to make any great impression. He writes his *Epistle* to the *Galatians* purposely against them; he warns the Christians at *Rome* of them. Now I beseech you Brethren

Rom. 16.

17.

mark them which cause Divisions and Offences contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. And because he had understood they had been busie at *Philippi* to make a party there too, therefore the Apostle, to prevent their designs, makes use of this following method.

1. He exhorts the *Philippians* to an unanimous and constant resolution, in holding fast to the faith of the Gospel, in spite of all the threats and malice of their enemies: *That ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries.* If once the fears of troubles and persecutions make men afraid to own and main-

Phil. 1. 27,

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tain their Religion; it will be an easie matter for their enemies first to divide, and then to subdue them. But their courage and unanimity in a good cause baffles the attempts of the most daring Adversaries, and makes them willing to retreat when they see they can neither disunite them nor make them afraid.

2. He beseeches them in the most vehement and affectionate manner, not to give way to any differences or divisions among them, *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels and mercies; fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love; being of one accord, of one mind.* As though he had said unto them, I have seen the miserable effects of divisions in other Churches already; how our Religion hath been reproached, the Gospel hindered, and the Cross of Christ rendred of little or no effect by reason of them; let me therefore intreat you, if ye have any regard to the Peace and Welfare of your own Souls; if ye have any sense of your duty ye owe to one another as members of the same body; if ye have any tenderness or pity towards me, avoid the first tenden-

Phil. 2.1, 2.

cies to any breaches among you; entertain no unjust suspicions or jealousies of each other; shew all the kindness ye are able to your fellow members; live as those that are acted by the same soul (*οὐμνοῦντες*) carry on the same design; and as much as possible prevent any differences in opinions amongst you.

3. He warns them and gives cautions against some persons from whom their greatest danger was, *viz.* such as pretended a mighty zeal for the Law: And very well understanding the mischief of their designs under their specious pretences, he bestows very severe characters upon them, *vers.* 2. *Beware of Dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the Concision.* All which characters relate to the breaches and divisions which they made in the Christian Churches; which like *Dogs* they did tear in pieces, and thereby did unspeakable mischief, and so were *evil workers*; and by the *Concision* S. Chrysostom understands such a cutting in pieces as tends to the destruction of a thing; and therefore, saith he, the Apostle called them *κατατομῆν*, ἐπὶ τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν ἐπείγειν τὸ κατατεμεῖν because they endeavoured to cut in pieces, and thereby to destroy the Church of God.

God. But lest they should give out that St. Paul spoke this out of a particular pique he had taken up against the Law of *Moses*, he declares that as to the spiritual intention and design of the Law it was accomplished in Christians, *vers. 3. For we are the Circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* And, for his own part, he had as much reason to glory in legal privileges as any of them all, *vers. 4, 5, 6.* but the excellency of the Gospel of Christ had so prevailed upon his mind, that he now despised the things he valued before, and made it his whole business to attain to the glorious reward which this Religion promisseth. This he pursues from *vers. 7, to vers. 15.*

4. Having done this, he persuades all good Christians to do as he did, *vers. 15. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect be thus minded.* But because many disputes and differences as to opinion and practice might happen among them, he therefore lays down two Rules for them to govern themselves by.

1. If any happen'd to differ from the body of Christians they lived with, they should do it with great Modesty and Humility, not breaking out into factions and divisions, but waiting for farther information, which they may expect that God will give upon a diligent and sober use of the best means; *And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.* By leaving them to God's immediate care for farther illumination, he doth not bid them depend upon extraordinary revelation; but requires them to wait upon God in his own way, without proceeding with the false Apostles to the ways of Faction and Separation, and in the mean time to go as far as they could.

2. For those who were come to a firmness and settlement of judgment upon the Christian principles, he charges them by all means to preserve Unity and Peace among themselves. *Where-to we have already attained, let us walk by the same Rule, let us mind the same things.*

Wherein the Apostle supposes two things.

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I. The necessity of one fixed and certain Rule, notwithstanding the different attainments among Christians. *Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same Rule.*

II. The duty and obligation which lies upon the best Christians to observe it. He doth not speak to the ignorant and unthinking multitude; not to the *licentious Rabble*, nor to the *carnal and worldly Church*; which some think are only desirous of Uniformity; but to the very best Christians; to those *who had got the start of others* (as the words here signifie) that they would be an example of Peace and Unity to their Brethren.

I. *The necessity of one fixed and certain Rule, notwithstanding the different attainments of Christians.* Τῷ αὐτῷ σοιχέω ἡγάγον· which Phrase seems to be a continuation of the former allusion to a Race.

For, as *Eustathius* observes, the first thing the Greeks were wont to do as to their Exercises, was to circumscribe the bounds within which they were to be performed. That which fixed and determined

ἡ δὲ πρώτη διαίρεσις.
Iliad. 3.

terminated these limits was called *Kovos* by the Greeks, and *Regula* and *Linea* by the Latines: thence *transilire lineas* in *Cicero* is to commit a fault, to break the bounds within which we are confined.

All the question is, what the Apostle means by this *Rule*, whether only a Rule of Charity and mutual forbearance, with a liberty of different practice; or such a *Rule* which limits and determines the manner of practice. It cannot be the former, because that is the case the Apostle had spoken to just before. *If in any thing ye be otherwise minded*; therefore now subjoyning this with respect to those who had gone beyond them, he doth imply such an agreement and uniformity of Practice as doth lie in observing the same standing Rule. For which we must consider, that they understood already what orders and directions he had given them when a Church was first formed among them; and therefore when the Apostle mentions a Rule, without declaring what it was, we have reason to believe it was such a Rule which they very well knew which he had given to them before. So we find elsewhere the Apostle refers to such

such Rules of Government and Order, which he had given to other Churches, and were already received and practised among them. For the *Apostles* did not write their Epistles for the founding of Churches, but they were already in being; only they took notice of any disorders among them, and reformed abuses, and left some things to *their own* directions, when they should come among them. *And the rest will I set in order when I come. As the Lord, hath called every one, so let him walk; And so ordain I in all the Churches.* Which shews that the Apostles did not leave all persons to act as they judged fit, but did make Rules determining their practice, and obliging them to uniformity therein. For might not men pretend that these were not things in themselves necessary, and might be scrupled by some Persons, and therefore were not fit to be imposed upon any? But I do not find that the Apostles on this account did forbear giving Rules in such cases, and to oblige Christians to observe them; and that not on the mere Authority of Apostles, but as Governours of Churches, whose business it is to take care of the welfare and preservation of them. There

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1 Cor. 7.

34.

1 Cor. 11.

17.

are many things which seem very little and inconsiderable in themselves, whose consequence and tendency is very great: and the wisdom of Governours lies in preventing the danger of little things, and keeping the zeal of well-meaning persons within its due bounds. For those who are engaged below, in the Valley, fighting in small parties, and pursuing their advantages, do run into the enemies Camp before they are aware of it, may receive an unexpected check from their Commanders in chief, who from the higher ground espie the hazard they are in by their over-forwardness, and the arts which their enemies use in drawing them into little Companies to fight separately, and the danger they may thereby bring upon the whole Army; and therefore send them a peremptory order to give over fighting by themselves and make good their retreat into the Body of the Army: They wonder, they complain, they think themselves hardly used; but no understanding man blames their Generals who regard their safety more than they do themselves, and know the allowing them the Liberty they desire, would endanger the destruction of them all.

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The Wisdom and Conduct of Governours, is quite another thing from the Zeal and Courage of inferiour Persons; who knowing their own resolution and integrity, think much to be controlled; but those who stand upon higher Ground and see farther than they can do, must be allowed a better capacity of judging what makes for the safety of the whole, than they can have: and such things which they look on in themselves, and therefore think them mean and trifling, the other look upon them in their consequence, and the influence they may have upon the publick safety. It were extremely desireable, that all good and usefull men should enjoy as much satisfaction as might be, but if it cannot be attained without running great hazards of unsettling all, it is then to be considered, whether the general safety or some mens particular satisfaction be the more desireable. And this is that which the example of the Apostles themselves gives us reason to consider, for although there were many doubts and scruples in their times about several Rites and Customs, yet the Apostles did give Rules in such cases, and bind Christians to observe them; as we find in that famous

Act. 15. 28. mous decree made upon great deliberation, in a Council of the Apostles at *Jerusalem*; wherein they determined those things which they knew were then scrupled, and continued so to be afterwards, where-ever the Judaizing Christians prevailed. But notwithstanding all their dissatisfaction, the Apostles continued the same Rule; and *St. Paul* here requires the most forward Christians to mind their Rule, and to preserve Peace and Unity among themselves.

But doth not St. Paul in the 14th Chapter of his Epistle to the Romans lay down quite another Rule, viz. only of mutual forbearance in such cases, where men are unsatisfied in Conscience?

I answer, that the Apostle did act like a prudent Governour, and in such a manner, as he thought did most tend to the propagation of the Gospel, and the good of particular Churches. In some Churches that consisted most of *Jews*, as the Church of *Rome* at this time did, and where they did not impose the necessity of keeping the Law on the Gentile Christians (as we do not find they did at *Rome*) the Apostle was willing to have the Law buried as decently, and with as little noise as might be;

be; and therefore in this case he perswades both parties to Forbearance and Charity, in avoiding *the judging and* Rom. 14. 3, 6, 10. *censuring one another, since they had an equal regard to the honour of God in what they did.* But in those Churches, where the false Apostles made use of this pretence, of the Levitical Law being still in force, to divide the Churches, and to separate the Communion of Christians; there the Apostle bids them beware of them, and their practices; as being of a dangerous and pernicious consequence. So that the preserving the Peace of the Church, and preventing Separation was the great measure, according to which, the Apostle gave his directions; and that makes him so much insist on this advice to the *Philippians*, that whatever their attainments in Christianity were, they should *walk by the same Rule, and mind the same things.*

II. We take notice of the Duty and Obligation that lies on the best Christians, *to walk by the same Rule, to mind the same things.*

From whence arise two very considerable Enquiries.

1. How

1. How far the obligation doth extend to comply with an established Rule, and to preserve the Peace of the Church we live in?

2. What is to be done, if men cannot come up to that Rule? For the Apostle speaks only of such as have attained so far; *Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same Rule.*

1. How far the obligation doth extend to comply with an established Rule, and to preserve the Peace of the Church we live in? This I think the more necessary to be spoken to, because I cannot persuade my self that so many scrupulous and conscientious men as are at this day among us would live so many years in a known sin; *i. e.* in a state of Separation from the Communion of a Church, which in Conscience they thought themselves obliged to communicate with. It must be certainly some great mistake in their judgments must lead them to this; (for I am by no means willing to impute it to passion and evil designs) and out of the hearty desire I have, if possible, to give satisfaction in this matter, I shall endeavour to search to the bottom of this dangerous mistake, to which we owe so much

much of our present distractions and fears.

But for the better preventing all misunderstanding the design of my Discourse, I desire it may be considered.

1. That I speak not of the Separation or distinct Communion of *whole Churches* from each other; which according to the Scripture, Antiquity and Reason, have a just right and power to govern and reform themselves. By *whole Churches*, I mean the Churches of such Nations, which upon the decay of the Roman Empire, resumed their just right of Government to themselves, and upon their owning Christianity, incorporated into one Christian Society, under the same common ties and rules of Order and Government. Such as the Church of *Macedonia* would have been, if from being a Roman Province it had become a Christian Kingdom, and the Churches of *Thessalonica*, *Philippi* and the rest had united together. And so the several Churches of the *Lydian* or *Proconsular Asia*, if they had been united in one Kingdom, and governed by the same Authority under the same Rules, might have been truly called the *Lydian Church*. Just as several Families

milities uniting make one Kingdom, which
 at first had a distinct and independent
 Power; but it would make strange con-
 fusion in the world to reduce Kingdoms
 back again to Families; because at first
 they were made up of them. Thus
 National Churches are National Socie-
 ties of Christians, under the same Laws
 of Government and Rules of Worship.
 For the true notion of a *Church* is no
 more than of a Society of men united to-
 gether for their Order and Government
 according to the rules of the Christian Re-
 ligion. And it is a great mistake, to make
 the notion of a *Church* barely to relate to
Acts of Worship; and consequently that
 the adequate notion of a *Church* is an
Assembly for Divine Worship; by which
 means they appropriate the name of
Churches to particular Congregations.
 Whereas if this held true, the *Church*
 must be dissolved as soon as the *Congre-
 gation* is broken up; but if they retain
 the nature of a *Church*, when they do
 not meet together for *Worship*, then
 there is some other bond that unites
 them; and whatever that is, it consti-
 tutes the *Church*. And if there be one
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ing in one Faith; then why may there not be one National Church from the consent in the same Articles of Religion, and the same Rules of Government, and Order of Worship? Nay, if it be mutual consent and agreement which makes a Church, then why may not National Societies agreeing together in the same Faith, and under the same Government and Discipline, be as truly and properly a Church, as any particular Congregation? For is not the Kingdom of France as truly a Kingdom consisting of so many Provinces, as the Kingdom of *Ivetat* once was in *Normandy*, which consisted of a very small territory? Among the *Athenians*, from whom the use of the word *Εκκλησια* came into the Christian Church, it was taken for such an Assembly, which had the power of governing and determining matters of Religion as well as the affairs of State. For the Senate of 500 being distributed into fifties according to the number of the Tribes, which succeeded by course through the year; and was then called *πρυτανεια*, every one of these had four *Νομοι*, *Εκκλησιαι*, Regular Assemblies; in the last of which, an account of the Sacrifices was taken and

Rob. Cœnalis Hist. Gallie. l. 2. p. 126.

Jul. Pollux Onomast. l. 8. c. 9 Schol. in Arist. Acharn. Act. 1. f. 1.

of other matters which concerned Religion; as in the *Comitia Calata* at Rome. From whence we may observe, that it was not the meeting of one of the single Tribes, was called *Exandria*, but the general Meeting of the Magistrates of the whole City and the People together. And in this sense I shall shew afterwards, the word was used in the first Ages of the Christian Church, as it comprehended the Ecclesiastical Governours and the People of whose Cities; and why many of these Cities being united under one civil Government, and the same Rules of Religion should not be called one National Church, I cannot understand. Which makes me wonder at those who say, *They cannot tell what we mean by the Church of England*. In short, we mean, that Society of Christian People which in this Nation are united under the same Profession of Faith, the same Laws of Government, and Rules of Divine Worship. And every Church thus constituted, we do assert to have a just right of governing it self, and of reforming Errors in Doctrine and Corruptions in Worship. On which ground, we are acquitted from the imputation of Schism in the

Sacrilegious desertion, p. 35.
Separation yet no Schism, p. 59.

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separation from the Roman Church; for we only resume our just rights, as the British Nation did, as to civil Government, upon the ruin of the Roman Empire.

2. I do not intend to speak of the terms upon which Persons are to be admitted among us to the exercise of the *Function* of the *Ministry*; but of the terms of *Lay-communion*, i. e. those which are necessary for all Persons to joyn in our Prayers, and Sacraments, and other Offices of Divine Worship. I will not say, there hath been a great deal of art used to confound these two, (and it is easie to discern to what purpose it is;) but I dare say, the Peoples not understanding the difference of these two cases hath been a great occasion of the present Separation. For in the judgment of some of the most impartial men of the Dissenters at this day, although they think the case of the *Ministers* very hard on the account of *Subscriptions* and *Declarations* required of them; yet they confess very little is to be said on the behalf of the People, from whom none of those things are required. So that the People are condemned in their Separation, by their own Teachers;

but how they can preach lawfully to a People who commit a fault in hearing them, I do not understand.

3. I do not confound bare *suspending Communion in some particular Rites*, which persons do modestly scruple, and using it in what they judge to be lawful; with either *total*, or at least *ordinary forbearance of Communion in what they judge to be lawful*; and proceeding to the forming of separate Congregations, i. e. under other Teachers, and by other Rules than what the established Religion allows. And this is the present case of *Separation* which I intend to consider, and to make the *sinfulness* and *mischief* of it appear.

But that I may do it more convincingly, I will not make the difference wider than it is; but lay down impartially the *state* of the present Controversie between us and our *dissenting Brethren*, about *Communion* with our Churches.

1. They unanimously confess they find no fault with the *Doctrine of our Church*, and can freely subscribe to all the *Doctrinal Articles*; nay they profess greater zeal for many of them, than, say they, *some of our own Preachers* do. Well then!

Peace-offering in the name of the Congregational Party, A.D. 1667. p. 10, 11. Baxter's Defence of

then! The case is vastly different as to their separation from us, and our separation from the Church of Rome; for we declare, if there were nothing else amiss among them, their Doctrines are such, as we can never give our assent to.

his Cure, p. 64. Separation yet no Schism, p. 60.

2. * They generally yield, that our *Parochial Churches* are true Churches; and it is with these their Communion is required. They do not deny that we have all the essentials of true Churches, true Doctrine, true Sacraments, and an implicit *Covenant between Pastors and People*. And some of the most eminent of the Congregational way have declared; that they look upon it, as an unjust Calumny cast upon them, that they look on our Churches as no true Churches.

Discourse concerning Evangelical Love, Church Peace and Unity, 1672. p. 84, 85, 86. See Carbet of Schism, p. 41. Baxter's Defence of his Cure, p. 38.

3. Many of them declare, That they hold Communion with our Churches to be lawfull. Yea, we are told in Print by one then present, that A. D. 1663. divers of their Preachers in London met to consider, how far it was lawfull, or their duty to communicate with the Parish-Churches where they lived, in the Liturgy and

Sacraments; and that the Relatour brought in twenty Reasons to prove that it is a duty to some to joyn with some Parish-Churches three times a year in the Lord's Supper; after he had not only proved it lawfull to use a Form of Prayer, and to joyn in the use of our Liturgy, but in the participation of the Sacrament with us; and no one of the Brethren, he adds, seemed to dissent, but to take the Reasons to be valid. Such another meeting, we are told, they had after the Plague and Fire, at which they agreed that Communion with our Churches was in it self lawfull and good. Who could have imagined otherwise, than that after the weight of so many Reasons, and such a general consent among them, they should have all joyned with us in what themselves judged to be lawfull, and in many cases a duty? But instead of this, we have rather since that time found them more inclinable to courses of separation, filling the people with greater prejudices against our Communion, and gathering them into fixed and separate Congregations; which have proceeded to the choice of new Pastors upon the death of old ones; and except some very few,
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Peace, p.
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scarce any, either of their Preachers or People here, come ordinarily to the publick Congregations. And this is that which at present we lament as a thing which unavoidably tends to our common ruin, if not in time prevented; for by this means the hearts of the People are alienated from each other, who apprehend the differences to be much greater than their Teachers will allow, when they are put to declare their minds; and our common enemies take as much advantage from our differences, as if they were really far greater than they are.

But you may ask, what then are the grounds of the present Separation? for that there is such a thing is discernible by all, but what the reasons of it are is hard to understand after these concessions; yet it is not conceivable that conscientious men can in such a juncture of affairs persist in so obstinate and destructive a course of separation, unless they had something at last fit to answer the *twenty Reasons* of their own Brethren against it?

I have endeavoured to give my self satisfaction in a matter of so great moment to the Peace and Preservation of this

this Church, and consequently of the Protestant Religion among us; which I never expect to see survive the destruction of the Church of England.

And the utmost I can find in the best Writers of the several Parties, amounts to these two things;

1. *That although they are in a state of separation from our Church, yet this separation is no sin.*

2. *That a state of separation would be a sin, but notwithstanding their meeting in different places, yet they are not in a state of separation.*

And herein lies the whole strength of the several Pleas at this day made use of to justify the *Separate Congregations*: both which I shall now examine.

Discourse
concern-
ing Evan-
gelical
Love,
Church-
Peace and
Unity, p.
68.

1. Some plead, *That it is true they have distinct and separate Communion from us, but it is no sin, or culpable separation so to have. For, say they, our Lord Christ instituted only Congregational Churches, or particular Assemblies for divine Worship, which having the sole Church power in themselves, they are under no obligation of Communion with other Churches, but only to preserve Peace and Charity with them. And to this Doctrine, others of late approach so near, that they*

they tell us, That to devise new species of Churches (beyond Parochial or Congregational) without God's Authority, and to impose them on the world (yea in his name) and call all Dissenters Schismatics, is a far worse usurpation, than to make or impose new Ceremonies or Liturgies. Which must suppose Congregational Churches to be so much the Institution of Christ, that any other Constitution above these is both unlawfull and insupportable. Which is more than the Independent Brethren themselves do assert.

Baxter's true and only way of Concord, A D. 1680. p. 111.

But to clear the practice of Separation from being a sin on this account, two things are necessary to be done.

1. To prove that a Christian hath no obligation to external Communion beyond a Congregational Church.

2. That it is lawfull to break off Communion with other Churches, to set up a particular independent Church.

1. That a Christian hath no obligation to external Communion beyond a particular Congregational Church.

Evangelical Love, &c. p. 49, 52, 54.

They do not deny, That men by Baptism are admitted into the Catholick visible Church as Members of it; and that there ought to be a sort of Communion by mutual Love among all that belong to this Body: and to do

do them right, they declare, *That they look upon the Church of England, or the Generality of the Nation professing Christianity, to be as sound and healthfull a part of the Catholick Church, as any in the World.* But then they say, *Communion in Ordinances must be only in such Churches as Christ himself instituted by unalterable Rules, which were only particular and Congregational Churches.*

P. 59.

Granting this to be true, how doth it hence appear not to be a sin to separate from our Parochial Churches, which according to their own concessions have all the Essentials of true Churches? And what ground can they have to separate and divide those Churches, which for all that we can see, are of the same nature with the Churches planted by the Apostles at *Corinth, Philippi or Thessalonica*? But I must needs say farther, I have never yet seen any tolerable proof, that the Churches planted by the Apostles were limited to Congregations. It is possible, at first, there might be no more Christians in one City than could meet in one Assembly for Worship; but where doth it appear, that when they multiplied into more Congregations, they did make new and distinct Churches,

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Churches, under new Officers with a Separate Power of Government? Of this, I am well assured, there is no mark or footsteps in the New Testament, or the whole History of the Primitive Church. I do not think it will appear credible to any considerate man, that the 5000 Christians in the Church of Jerusalem made one stated and fixed Congregation for divine Worship; not if we make all the allowances for *strangers* which can be desired: but if this were granted, where are the unakerable Rules that as soon as the company became too great for one particular Assembly, they must become a new Church under peculiar Officers and an independent Authority?

It is very strange, that those who contend so much for the Scriptures being a perfect Rule of all things pertaining to Worship and Discipline, should be able to produce nothing in so necessary a Point. If that of which we read the clearest instances in Scripture, must be the standard of all future Ages, much more might be said for limiting Churches to private Families, than to particular Congregations. For, do we not read of the Church that was in the

Rom. 16. 3.

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of the Church, that was in the House of
 Col. 4. 15. Nymphas at Colosse; and in the House
 Philem. 2. of Philemon at Laodicea. Why then
 should not Churches be reduced to par-
 ticular Families, when by that means
 they may fully enjoy the Liberty of their
 Consciences, and avoid the scandal of
 breaking the Laws? But if, notwith-
 standing such plain examples, men will
 extend Churches to Congregations of many
 Families; why may not others, extend
 Churches to those Societies which con-
 sist of many Congregations? Especially
 considering, that the Apostles when
 they instituted Churches, did appoint
 such Officers in them, as had not bare-
 ly a respect to those already converted,
 but to as many as by their means should
 be added to the Church; as Clemens af-
 firms in his Epistle; *The Apostles*, saith
 he, *went about in Cities and Countries*
preaching the Gospel; and appointed their
First-fruits, having made a spiritual trial
of them; for Bishops and Deacons, of
many of them, of those who were to
believe. From hence the number of
 Converts were looked on as an accessi-
 on to the Original Church, and were
 under the care and Government of the
 Bishop and Presbyters, who were first
 settled

Clem. Ep.
 ad Cor. p.
 55.

settled
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settled there. For although when the Churches increased, the occasional meetings were frequent in several places; yet still there was but *one Church*, and *one Altar*, and *one Baptistry*, and *one Bishop*, with many *Presbyters* assisting him. And this is so very plain in Antiquity, as to the Churches planted by the Apostles themselves in several parts, that none but a great stranger to the History of the Church can ever call it in question. I am sure *Calvin*, a person of great and deserved reputation among our Brethren, looks upon this as a matter out of dispute among learned men, that a Church did not only take in the Christians of a whole City, but of the adjacent Country too; and the contrary opinion is a very novel and late fancy of some among us, and hath not Age enough to plead a Prescription. It is true, after some time in the greater Cities, they had distinct places allotted, and Presbyters fixed among them; and such allotments were called *Tithes* at *Rome*, and *Laure* at *Alexandria*, and *Parishes* in other places; but these were never thought then to be new Churches, or to have any independent Government in themselves; but

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bat. (C. 1. c. 1.)
Iust. corpore
Ecclēsiæ. il-
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Cathedra. Im-
p. 1. c. 1.
q. 2. 2.

Novo
ex. 1. c. 1.

were all in subjection to the Bishop and his College of Presbyters, of which multitudes of examples might be brought from most authentick Testimonies of Antiquity; if a thing so evident needed any proof at all. And yet this distribution even in Cities was so uncommon in those older times, that *Epiphanius* takes notice of it as an extraordinary thing at *Alexandria*; and therefore it is probably supposed there was no such thing in all the Cities of *Crete* in his time. And if we look over the ancient Canons of the Church, we shall find two things very plain in them; (1.) That the notion of a Church was the same with that of a Diocese; or such a number of Christians as were under the inspection of a Bishop. (2.) That those Presbyters who rejected the Authority of their Bishop, or affected separate meetings, where no fault could be found with the Doctrine of a Church, were condemned of Schism. So the followers of *Eustathius Sebastianus*, who withdrew from the publick Congregations on pretence of greater sanctity and purity, in *Paphlagonia*, were condemned by the Council at *Gangre*; so were those who separated from their Bishops, though

Petr. 1. 12.

in Epiph.

lib. 69. n.

1. Canon.

Nicen. 6.

15, 16.

Const. 6.

Chastred.

17, 20, 26.

Antioch.

c. 2. *Codex*

Eccl. Afric.

c. 53. c. 35.

Council.

Gangr. c. 6.

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though otherwise never so orthodox,
by the Council at *Constantinople*, and
the Council at *Carthage*; wherein be-
fore S. Cyprian had so justly complain-
ed of the Schism of *Felicissimus* and his
Brethren, who on pretence of some dis-
orders in the Church of *Carthage* had
withdrawn to the Mountains; and
there laid the Foundation of the *Novat-
ian* Schism. But when false Doctrine
was imposed on Churches, as by the
Arian Bishops at *Antioch*, then the peo-
ple were excused in their separation; so
at *Rome* when *Felix* was made Bishop;
and at *Sirmium* when *Photinus* published
his Heresie; but I do not remember one
instance in Antiquity, wherein separa-
tion from *Orthodox Bishops*, and setting
up *Meetings* without their Authority
and against their consent, was acquit-
ted from the sin of *Schism*. Indeed some
Bishops have sometimes refused Com-
munion with others upon great misde-
meanours; as *Theognostus* and S. *Mar-
tin* with the *Ithacian* party on the ac-
count of the death of *Priscillian*; but
this doth not at all reach to the case of
Presbyters separating from Bishops, with
whom they agree in the same Faith.
The followers of S. *Chrysostom*, did, I

Council.
Const. c. 6.
Council. Car-
thag. c. 10,
11.
Cyprian.
Ep. 40, 42.
Theod.
Ecl. Hist. l.
1. c. 22. l. 2.
c. 24. c. 17.
Vincent.
c. 16.

confess, continue their separate Meetings after his banishment, and the coming in of *Arsacius* : but although they withdrew in his time, being unsatisfied in the manner of his choice; yet when *Atticus* restored the name of *S. Chrysostom* to the *Diptychs* of the Church, they returned to Communion with their Bishop, as *S. Chrysostom* himself advised them (as appears by *Palladius*) which is far from justifying the wilfull separation of *Presbyters* and People from the Communion of their *Bishops*, when they do agree in the same Faith.

Baron. A.
D. 404. n.
41. 412. n.
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2. But suppose the first Churches were barely congregational, by reason of the small number of Believers at that time, yet what obligation lies upon us to disturb the Peace of the Church we live in to reduce Churches to their Infant-state. They do not think it necessary to reduce the first Community of Goods, which was far more certainly practised, than congregational Churches; they do not think it necessary to wash one anothers feet, although Christ did it; and bade his Disciples do as he did: they believe that the first civil Government was appointed by God himself over Families; do they therefore think themselves bound

Joh. 13. 14.

to overthrow Kingdoms to bring things back to their first institution? If not, why shall the Peace of the Church be in so much worse a condition than that of the Civil state? It is very uncertain whether the Primitive Form were such as they fancy; if it were, it is more uncertain whether it were not so from the circumstances of the times, than from any institution of Christ; but it is most certainly our duty to preserve Peace and Unity among Christians; and it is impossible so to do if men break all Orders in pieces for the fancy they have taken up of a Primitive Platform. It is a great fault among some who pretend to great niceness in some *positive Duties*, that they have so little regard to *comparative Duties*: For that which may be a duty in one case, when it comes to thwart a greater duty, may be none. This Doctrine we learn from Mat. 12.7. our blessed Saviour in the case of the obligation of the Sabbath; which he makes to yield to duties of Mercy. And can we think that a duty lying upon us, which in our circumstances makes a far greater duty impracticable? Is there any thing Christ and his Apostles have charged more upon the Conscience

ces of all Christians, than studying to preserve Peace and Unity among Christians? This is that *we must follow after*, even when it seems to fly from us; this is that *we must apply our minds to*, and *think it our honour to promote*; this is that which the most perfect Christians are the most zealous for; this is that, for the sake of which we are commanded to practise meekness, humility, patience, self-denial and submission to Governors. And after all this, can we imagine the attaining of such an end should depend upon mens conjectures, whether five thousand Christians in times of persecution could make one Assembly for Worship? Or whether all the Christians in Ephesus or Corinth made but one Congregation? On what terms can we ever hope for Peace in the Church, if such Notions as these be ground enough to disturb it? What stop can be put to Schisms and Separations, if such pretences as these be sufficient to justify them? Men may please themselves in talking of preserving Peace and Love under separate Communions; but our own sad experience shews the contrary; for as nothing tends more to unite mens hearts than joyning together in the same

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Prayers and Sacraments; so nothing doth more alienate mens affections, than withdrawing from each other into separate Congregations. Which tempts some to spiritual Pride and scorn and contempt of others, as of a more *carnal* and *worldly Church* than themselves; and provokes others to lay open the follies and indiscretions and immoralities of those who pretend to so much Purity and Spirituality above their Brethren.

5. Others confess, *that to live in a state of separation from such Churches, as many at least of ours are, were a sin*; for they say, *that causeless renouncing Communion with true Churches is Schism, especially if it be joyned with setting up Anti-Churches unwarrantably against them*; but this they deny that they do, although they preach when and where it is forbidden by Law; and worship God, and administer Sacraments by other Rules, and after a different manner than what our Church requires. This is not dealing with us with that fairness and ingenuity which our former Brethren used; for they avow the fact of *separation*, but deny it to be sinfull; these owning it to be sinfull, have no other refuge left

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Sect. 40.

but to deny the fact, which is evident to all Persons. For do they not do the very same things and in the same manner, that the others do; how comes it then to be *separation* in some and not in others? They are very unwilling to confess a *separation*, because they have formerly condemned it with great severity; and yet they do the same things for which they charged others as guilty of a *sinfull separation*.

For, the *Assembly of Divines* urged their *dissenting Brethren* to comply with their *Rules of Church Government*, and charged them with *Schism* if they did it not; whereas they only desired to enjoy such liberty as to their *separate Congregations*, as is now pleaded for by our *dissenting Brethren*. This, say they, would give countenance to a perpetual *Schism and Division in the Church*, still drawing away some from the Churches under the Rule, which also would breed irritations between the Parties; and would introduce all manner of Confusion. And they thought it a very unreasonable thing for them to desire distinct and separate Congregations, as to those parts of worship where they could joyn in Communion with them: and they thought no per-

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Papers for
accommodation,
printed
1648 p. 16.
p. 20, 21.

Sermon Sixth.

343

P. 22.

son was to be indulged as to any Error or Scruple of Conscience; but with this Provifo, that in all other parts of worship they joyn with the Congregation wherein they live; and be under the Govern- ment to be established. To this the dissenting Brethren answered, that such a variation, or forbearance, could neither be a Schism, nor endanger it; and that the great cause of Schism hath been a strict obligation of all to Uniformity; that as long as in their separate Congregations they did practise most of the same things, and the most substantial in their Rule, it could not be called a total separation, especially considering, that they professed their Churches to be true Churches; and that they had occasional Communion with them, which is the very same Plea made use of at this day among us. To which the Assemblies Party smartly replied, That since they acknowledged their Churches to be so true, that they could occasionally joyn in all Acts of worship, they conceived they were bound to act with them in joint Communion by one common Rule, and not by different Rules and in separated Congregations. And they add, that to leave all ordinary Communion in any Church with dislike, when opposition or offence offers it

P. 25.

P. 28, 29,
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P. 47.

P. 55.

P. 56.

self, is to separate from such a Church in the Scripture sense; such separation was not in being in the Apostles times, unless it were used by false Teachers; all who professed Christianity held Communion together, as in one Church, notwithstanding differences of Judgment, or corruptions in Practice; and that, if they can hold occasional Communion without sin, they know no reason why it may not be ordinary without sin too, and then separation would be needless. To which they subjoyn these remarkable words, which I heartily wish our Brethren at this day would think seriously upon, *To separate from those Churches ordinarily and visibly with whom occasionally you may joyn without sin, seemeth to be a most unjust separation.* So that whatever false colours and pretences some men make use of to justify their present practice, if the judgment of their own Brethren may be taken upon the most weighty debate, and most serious deliberation, it is no better than plain and down-right separation. And, I must needs say, I never saw any Cause more weakly defended, no, not that of Polygamy and Anabaptism, than that of those, who allow it to be lawfull to joyn in Communion with us, and yet

go

go about to vindicate the *separate Meetings* among us, from the guilt of a *sinfull separation*. For although they allow our Churches to be true, and that it is lawfull to communicate with them, which is the most plausible Plea they have, this is so far from extenuating, that it doth aggravate the fault; for as the Brethren of the Assembly said, *Though they do not pronounce an affirmative Judgment against us; yet the very separating is a tacit and practical condemning of our Churches, if not as false, yet as impure.* P. 71.

But whatever may be said as to other Pleas for their present practices, my Text seems to afford the strongest of all, viz. that men are to be pressed to go no farther than *they have already attained*, and not to be strained up to an *uniformity* beyond the dictates of their Consciences, but to be let alone, as the Apostle directs in the foregoing verse, *If any one be otherwise minded, he must be left to God*, and that manifestation of his Will, which he will be pleased to give him.

The clearing of this will give a full answer to the second enquiry, viz.

2. *What is to be done, if men cannot come up to the Rule prescribed.*

To

To this therefore I answer in these particulars.

I. This can never justify men in not doing what they lawfully may do. For this Rule of the Apostle makes Communion necessary, as far as it is lawfull; and that upon the account of the general obligation lying upon all Christians to do what in them lies for preservation of the Peace of the Church. *Therefore as far as ye have attained walk by the same Rule, do the same things;* which words, saith *Cajetan*, the Apostle subjoins to the former, lest the persons he there speaks to should think themselves excused from going as far as they can as to the same Rule. Which plainly shews that men are bound in Conscience to go as far as they can; and I cannot see how it is consistent with that *tenderness of Conscience* which our Brethren pretend to, for so many of them to live so many years in a neglect of that Communion with our Church, which themselves judge to be lawfull.

I dare say, if most of the Preachers at this day in the *separate Meetings* were soberly asked their judgments, whether it were lawfull for the People to join with us in the publick Assemblies, they would

would not deny it; and yet the People that frequent them, generally judge otherwise. For it is not to be supposed, that faction among them should so commonly prevail beyond interest; and therefore if they thought it were lawful for them to comply with the Laws, they would do it. But why then is this kept up as such a mighty secret in the breasts of their Teachers? Why do they not preach it to them in their Congregations? Is it for fear, they should have none left to preach to? that is not to be imagined of mortified and conscientious men. Is it lest they should seem to condemn themselves, while they preach against *Separation* in a *Separate Congregation*?

This, I confess, looks oddly, and the tenderness of a man's mind in such a case, may out of meer shamefacedness keep him from declaring a Truth which flies in his face, while he speaks it.

Is it that they fear the reproaches of the People? which some few of the most eminent Persons among them, have found they must undergo if they touch upon this Subject (for I know not how it comes to pass, that the most *Godly*
People

People among them, can the least endure to be told of their faults.) But is it not as plainly written by *S. Paul*,
 Gal. 1. 10. *If I yet please men I should not be the Servant of Christ; as Woe be unto me if I preach not the Gospel?* If they therefore would acquit themselves like honest and conscientious men, let them tell the People plainly that they look on our Churches as true Churches, and that they may lawfully communicate with us in Prayers and Sacraments; and I do not question but in time, if they find it lawfull, they will judge it to be their Duty. For it is the Apostles command here, *Whereto we have already attained let us walk by the same Rule, let us mind the same things.*

2. *If the bare dissatisfaction of mens Consciences do justifie the lawfulness of Separation, and breaking an established Rule, it were to little purpose to make any Rule at all.* Because it is impossible to make any, which ignorant and injudicious men shall not apprehend to be in some thing or other against the dictates of their Consciences. But because what we say may not weigh so much with them in this matter, as what was said on

on this Occasion by their own Brethren in the Assembly, I shall give an account of their Judgment in this matter.

The dissenting Brethren were not so much wanting to their Cause, as not to plead tenderness of Conscience with as much advantage and earnestness as any men now can do it. To which they answer,

I. That though tenderness of Conscience may justifie Non-communication in the thing scrupled, yet it can never justifie Separation.

Papers for Accommodation, p. 51. V. p. 61.

We much doubt, say they, whether such tenderness of Conscience, as ariseth out of an opinion, cui potest subesse falsum, (which may be false) when the Conscience is so tender, that it may be withall an erring Conscience, can be a sufficient ground to justifie such a material Separation, as our Brethren plead for; For though it may bind, to forbear or suspend the Act of Communion in that particular wherein men conceive they cannot hold Communion without sin (nothing being to be done contrary unto Conscience) yet it doth not bind to follow such a positive prescript as possibly may be divers from the Will and Counsel of God, of which kind we conceive this of gathering Separated Churches

Churches out of other true Churches to be one.

- P. 66. 2. That it is endless to hope to give satisfaction to erring Consciences. The Grounds, say they, upon which this Separation is desired, are such upon which all other possible scruples which erring Consciences may in any other cases be subject unto, may claim the privilege of a like Indulgence. And so this Toleration being the first, shall indeed but lay the Foundation and open the gap, whereat as many divisions in the Church, as there may be scruples in the minds of men, shall upon the self same equity be let in. And again,
- P. 73. that this will make way for infinite divisions and sub-divisions; and give Countenance to a perpetual Schism, and Division in the Church.

3. That scruple of Conscience is no protection against Schism; no cause of Separating; nor doth it take off causeless Separation from being Schism, which may arise from Errors of Conscience as well as carnal and corrupt Reasons; and therefore they conceive the causes of Separation must be shewn to be such as *ex natura rei* will bear it out.

4. That

4. That the Apostle notwithstanding the difference of mens Judgments did prescribe Rules of Uniformity. For, say they, they suppressed the contentions of men by the custom of the Churches of God, 1 Cor. 11. 16. and ordain the same practice in all the Churches, notwithstanding our Brethrens distinction of difference of light, 1 Cor. 7. 17. And did not the Apostles bind the burthen of some necessary things on the Churches, albeit there were in those Churches gradual differences of light?

P. 111.

5. That the Apostle by this Rule in the Text, did not intend to allow Brethren who agree in all substantials of Faith and Worship, to separate from one another, in those very substantials wherein they agree. Is this, say they, to walk by the same Rule, and to mind the same things, to separate from Churches in those very things wherein we agree with them? We desire no more of them than we are confident was practised by the Saints at Philippi; namely, to hold practical Communion in things wherein they doctrinally agree.

P. 113.

114.

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P. 115.

6. That there is a great deal of difference between Tyranny over mens Consciences, and Rules of Uniformity. For the dissenting Brethren charged the Assembly, with setting up an Uniformity for Uni-

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211. 9 Uniformity's sake, i. e. affecting Uniformity so much, as not to regard mens Consciences, and without respect had to the varieties of Light in matters of a lesser nature; which, say they, will prove a perfect tyranny, and it is in effect to stretch a low man to the same length with a taller, or to put a tall man to the stature of one that is low, for Uniformity's sake. To which the others answer, That they do not desire Uniformity for the sake of Tyranny, but only for order, and order for Edification. But for ought they could perceive, any thing that is One must be judged the foundation of Tyranny (which are
 411 their own words.) As to variety of light, they desired their Brethren to answer them in this one thing, whether some must be denied liberty of their Conscience in matter of practice, or none? If none, then, say they, we must renounce our Covenant and let in Popery again; and all others ways; if a denial of liberty unto some may be just, then Uniformity may be settled notwithstanding variety of lights,
 211. 9 without any Tyranny at all. As to their finitude, they grant it to be pretty and plausible; but such arguments are popular and inartificial, having more of flourish than substance in them. For did not they
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endeavour to raise lower Churches to a greater height? would they permit other Church Governments if it were in their power, because men must not for Uniformity's sake be pared or stretched to the measure of other men? would they endure the lower suckers at the root of their tree to grow till they had killed the tree it self? Ad populum phaleras.

From whence we see the Church of England's endeavour after Uniformity is acquitted from Tyranny over the Consciences of men by the Judgment of the most learned of the Assembly of Divines? for such we do not question they chose to manage this debate, upon which the turn of their whole affairs depended.

3. A wilfull Error or mistake of Conscience doth by no means excuse from sin. Thus if a man think himself bound to divide the Church by a sinfull Separation; that Separation is nevertheless a sin for his thinking himself bound to do it. For S. Paul thought himself bound to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth, yet he calls himself a blasphemor and the greatest of sinners, for what he did under that obligation of Conscience. The Jews thought themselves bound in Conscience to do God service, but it was

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Acts 26.9.

1 Tim. 1.

13. 15.

S. Joh. 16. 2.

a horrible mistake, when they took *killing the Apostles to be any part of it*. From whence it appears, that men may do very bad things, and yet think themselves *bound in Conscience* to do them. I do not hence infer that the pretence of *Conscience* is not to be regarded, because it may be abused to so ill purposes; for no man that hath any *Conscience* will speak against the *Power* of it, and he that declares against it, hath no reason to be regarded in what he saith. But that which ought to be inferred from hence, is, that men ought not to rest satisfied with the present dictates of their *Consciences*, for notwithstanding them they may commit very great sins. I am afraid, the common mistating the *Case* of an *Erroneous Conscience* hath done a great deal of Mischief to conscientious men, and betray'd them into great security, while they are assured they do act according to their *Consciences*. For the *question* is generally put, *How far an Erroneous Conscience doth oblige?* And when men hear that they must not act against their *Consciences* though they be mistaken, they think themselves safe enough and enquire no farther. But if they would consider, that no man's *Conscience*

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science alters the nature of *Good* and *Evil* in things; that what *God* hath made a *Duty* or a *Sin* remains so, whatever a man's *Conscience* doth judge concerning them; that no man's *Conscience* can strictly oblige him either to omit a *Duty*, or to commit a *Sin*; the utmost *Resolution* of the *Case* comes to this, That a man may be so perplexed and entangled by an *erroneous Conscience*, that he may be under a necessity of sinning, if he acts either with or against it. Not that *God* ever puts a man under the necessity of sinning, (for then it would be no sin to him, if it were unavoidable) but that by their own neglect and carelessness, without looking after due information, and running on with violent *Prejudices*, which was the case of *S. Paul* and the *Jews* (and I wish it were not of many *Christians*) they may make false and rash judgments of things, and so *sin* either in doing or not doing what their *Consciences* tell them they are bound to do.

The most material *Question* then, in the case of an *erroneous Conscience*, is, What *Error* of *Conscience* doth excuse a man from *Sin* in following the *Dictates* of it? For, if the *Error* be wholly in-

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voluntary; *i. e.* if it be caused by *invin-*
cible Ignorance, or after using the *best*
means for due information of his *Consci-*
ence, though the *Act* may be a fault in
 it self, yet it shall not be imputed to
 him as a *Sin*; because it wanted the *con-*
sent of the *Mind*, by which the *Will* is
 determined; but if men fall into *Wilfull*
Errours of Conscience; *i. e.* if they form
 their *Judgments* rather by *Prejudice* and
Passion and *Interest* than from the *Laws*
 of *God* or just *Rules of Conscience*; if
 they do not examine things fairly on
 both sides, praying for divine direction;
 if they have not patience to hear any
 thing against their opinion, but run on
 blindly and furiously, they may in so do-
 ing *act* according to their *Consciences*, and
 yet they may be in as great danger of
 committing heinous sins as *St. Paul* and
 the *Jews* were. Thus if men through
 the *Power* of an *Erroneous Conscience* may
 think themselves bound to make *Schisms*
 and *Divisions* in the *Church*, to disobey
Laws and to break in pieces the *Com-*
munion of that *Church*, which they are,
 or ought to be members of, they may
 satisfy themselves that they pursue their
Consciences, and yet for want of due
 care of informing themselves and judg-
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ing aright, those very Actions may be *Wilfull and Damnable Sins.*

Nothing now remains but to make *Application* of what hath been said to our own Case. And that shall be to two sorts of Persons, 1. to those who *continue* in the *Communion* of our *Church*, 2. to those who *dissent* from it.

I. To those who *continue* in the *Communion* of our *Church*. *Let us walk by the same Rule, and mind the same things.* Let us study the *Unity* and *Peace*, and thereby the *Honour* and *Safety* of it. While we keep to *one Rule*, all People know what it is to be of our *Church*; if men set up their own fancies above the *Rule*, they charge it with *imperfection*; if they do not obey the *Rule*, they make themselves wiser than those that made it. It hath not been either the *Doctrine* or *Rules* of our *Church* which have ever given advantage to the *Enemies* of it; but the *indiscretion* of some in going beyond them; and the *inconstancy* of others in not holding to them.

Such is the *Purity* of its *Doctrine*, such the *Loyalty* of its *Principles*, such the *Wisdom*, and *Order*, and *Piety* of its *De-*

notions, that none who are true Friends to any of these, can be Enemies to it. Let us take heed we do not give too much occasion to our Enemies to think the worse of our *Church* for our sakes. It is easie to observe, that most quarrels relating to *Constitutions* and *Frames* of *Government* are more against *Persons* than *things*; when they are unsatisfied with their management, then they blame the *Government*; but if themselves were in place, or those they love and esteem, then the *Government* is a good thing, if it be in good mens hands. Thus do mens judgments vary as their interests do.

Anf. to 2
Questions.
1659.

And so as to *Churches*, we find *Uniformity* and *Order* condemned as *Tyrannical*, till men come into *Power* themselves, and then the very same things and arguments are used and thought very good and substantial, which before were weak and sophistical. Those who speak now most against the *Magistrates* *Power* in matters of *Religion* had *ten substantial Reasons* for it, when they thought the *Magistrate* on their own side. Those who now plead for *Toleration*, did once think it the *Mother* of *Confusion*, the *Nurse* of *Atheism*, the *Inlet* of *Popery*, the

the common Sink of all *Errors* and *Heresies*. But, if there be not much to be said against the *Churches Constitution*, then they are ready to lay load upon the *Persons* of the *Governours* and *Members* of it; and thence pretend to a necessity of *Separation* for a purer *Communion*. Let us endeavour to remove this objection, not by recrimination (which is too easie in such cases) but by living suitably to our holy Religion, by reforming our own lives, and redressing (what in us lies) the *Scandals* and *Disorders* of others. Let us by the innocency and unblameableness of our lives, the life and constancy of our devotions, the meekness and gentleness of our behaviour in our own Cause, our Zeal and Courage in God's, add a lustre to our Religion and bring others to a *Love* of our *Church*.

II. To those who *dissent* from our *Communion*. *Whether they hear, or whether they will forbear*, I cannot dismiss this subject, without offering some things to them.

1. By way of *Consideration*.

2. By way of *Advice*.

(1.) I shall offer these things to their
Consideration.

They that are ruled must consider, that the best Policy or Constitution, so far as it is of man's regulating, hath defects and inconveniencies, and affairs will be complicated; and therefore they must not be too unyielding, but bear with what is tolerable, and not easily remediable. *Corbet of the sound State of Religion,* p. 75. 1679.
Ball against Can. p. 13.

I. Let them consider *How many things must be born with in the Constitution of a Church,* which cannot be expected in this World to be *without Spot or Wrinkle.* And if men will set themselves only to find faults, it is impossible, in this state of things, they should ever be pleased. And if they *separate where they see any thing amiss,* they must follow his example who pursued this

Principle so far, till he withdrew from all *Society*, lest he should communicate with them in their Sin; in which condition he continued till his Children lay dead in the house, and he became utterly unable to help himself; and because *no humane inventions were to be allowed about the Worship of God,* he had cut out of his Bible the *Contents of the Chapters,* and *Titles of the Leaves,* and so left the *bare Text,* without Binding or Covers. This is the Case the rigid and impracticable Principles of some would bring our *Churches* to, by cutting off all *Rules of Order and Decency,* as encroachments

croachments on the *Institutions* of Christ.

2. I desire them to consider *how impossible it is to give satisfaction to all, and how many things must be allowed a favourable interpretation in publick Constitutions and general Laws*; which it is hardly possible so to frame, but there will be room left for Cavils and Exceptions. Yea, *when the wisest and best men have done their utmost, some of themselves confess, there may be dissatisfaction still; and if Christian Humility, Charity and Discretion, will then advise persons to acquiesce in their private security and freedom, and not to unsettle the publick Order for their private satisfaction*; Why should not men practise the same virtues themselves; which they do confess, will be necessary for *some* at last?

Wise and good men will consider the difficulties that always attend publick Establishments; and have that esteem for *Peace and Order*, that they will bear with any thing tolerable for the sake of it. It is a very hard case with a Church when men shall set their *Wits* to strain

it is exceeding difficult to devise a Rule or Model that shall provide for all whom Equity will plead for. Therefore the prudent and sober will acquiesce in any Constitution that is in some good sort proportionable to the ends of Government. *A Discourse of the Religion of England, &c.* §. 14. Printed 1667.

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Latitude,
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every thing to the worst sense, to stretch Laws beyond the intention and design of them, to gather together all the doubtful and obscure passages in *Calenders*, *Translations*, &c. and will not distinguish between their approbation of the use and of the choice of things, for upon such terms as these men think to justify the present *Divisions*. I much question, whether if they proceed in such a manner, they can hold *Communion* with any *Church* in the *Christian world*. If men be disposed to find faults, no *Church* can be pure enough; for something will be amiss either in *Doctrine*, or *Discipline*, or *Ceremonies*, or *Manners*; but if they be disposed to Peace and Union, then *Charity will cover a multitude of failings*; and then according to St. Paul's advice, *with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in Love, they will be endeavouring to preserve the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace*. And without the practice of the former Virtues, no Metaphysical Discourses of *Unity*, will signify any thing to the *Churches Peace*.

3. They would do well to consider, *How Separation of the People from our Churches*

See Baxter's Cure of Divisions, p. 264.

Eph. 4. 2, 3.

Churches comes to be more lawfull now, than in the days of our Fathers. It hath been often and evidently proved, that the most sober and learned Non-conformists of former times, notwithstanding their scruples in some points, yet utterly condemned Separation from our Churches as unlawfull. And they looked upon this, not as a mere common sin of humane infirmity, but as a wilfull and dangerous sin; in that it is so far from tending to the overthrow of Antichrist, that it upholds and maintains him; calling it a renting the Church, the disgrace of Religion, the advancement of Pride, Schism and Contention, the offence of the Weak, the grief of the Godly, who be better settled, the hardning of the Wicked, and the recovery or rising again of Antichristianism; nay, even persecuting the Lord Jesus in his Host, which they revile; in his Ordinances, which they dishonour; and in his Servants, whose footsteps they slander, whose Graces they despise, whose Office they trample upon with disdain. These are the very words of one of the most learned and judicious Non-conformists before the Wars. And surely the mischiefs that followed after, could not make Separation to appear less odious.

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Papers of accommodation, p. 52.

Ball against Can. Praef. p. 2.

Was it a sin? was it such a sin then? and is it none now? Either our Brethren at this day, do believe it to be a Sin for the People to separate, or they do not: If not, it must either be, that there are new and harder terms of Communion, which were not then; which is so far from being true, that they confess them to be rather easier for the People: or it must be, that they are gone off from the peaceable Principles of their Predecessors, which they are unwilling to own. If they do believe it to be a Sin, why do they suffer the People to live in a known Sin? Why do they encourage them by Preaching in separate Congregations? For their Predecessors did not think it lawfull, much less a Duty, to preach when forbidden by a Law: *neither did they understand what warrant any ordinary Minister hath in such a case by God's word, so to draw any Church or People to his private Ministry in opposition to the Laws and Government he lived under.* They understood the difference between the Apostles cases and theirs; and never thought the Apostles, *Woe be unto me if I preach not the Gospel, did extend to them; but thought that silenced Ministers ought to live*

Bradshaw
against
Johnson, §.
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Gouger
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live as private Members of the Church till they were restored, and the People bound to hear others. Of which there can be far less ground to dispute, when themselves acknowledge the *Doctrine* by Law established to be true and sound.

4. Lastly, Let me beseech them to consider the common danger that threatens us all by means of our Divisions. We have Adversaries subtle and industrious enough to make use of all advantages to serve their own ends; and there is scarce any other they promise themselves more from, than the continuance of these breaches among our selves: This some of our Brethren themselves have been aware of; and on that account have told the People of the danger of the Principles of Separation, as to the interest of Religion in general, and the Protestant Religion in particular among us.

Nothing that I know of in the world, doth so strongly tempt some sober consci-

entious men to think Popery necessary for the Concord of Churches, and a violent Church-Government necessary to our Peace, as the wofull experience of the Errors and Schisms, the mad and manifold Sects that arise among those that are most against them. Baxter's last Answer to Bagshaw, p. 30.

You little know what a pernicious design the Devil hath upon you, in perswading you to desire and endeavour to pull down the interest of Christ and Religion, which is upheld in the Parish Churches of this Land: and to think that it is best to bring them as low in reality, or reputation as you can, and to contract the religious Interest all into private Meetings, *Id. p. 31. n. 25.*

Cer-

Certainly, Nothing would tend more to our common security than for all true and sincere Protestants to lay aside their prejudices, and mistakes, and to joyn heartily in *Communion* with us: which many of their *Teachers* at this day allow to be lawfull. And how can they satisfie themselves in hazarding our Religion by not doing that, which themselves confesse lawfull to be done?

(2.) But if we are not yet ripe for so great a mercy as a perfect Union, yet I would intreat our *Brethren* to make way for it by hearkening to these following *Advices*.

1. *Not to give encouragement to rash and intemperate zeal*; which rends all in pieces, and makes reconciliation impossible. Those who see least into things, are usually the fiercest contenders about them: and such eager Disputants are fitter to make quarrels than to end them; for they can be *contentious* for *Peace-sake*, and make new differences about the *ways* of *Unity*. Wisdom and sobriety, a good judgment, a prudent temper, and freedom from prejudice will tend more to end our differences, than warm Debates, and long Disputations; which as *Greg. Nazianzen* said, once of
Coun-

Councils, *seldom have had any good end.* But there is a more fiery sort of zeal, and more dangerous than this; which may lie smothering for a time, till it meets with suitable matter and a freer vent, and then it breaks out into a dreadful flame. This we have already seen such dismal effects of in this age, that we should think there were less need to give men caution against it again, were it not to be feared, that where Reason cannot prevail, Experience will not. All that we can say to such persons that may be like to move them, is, that if their *blind zeal* transport them, as it did *Sampson*, to pull down the *House* over their *Heads*, they will be sure to perish themselves in the fall of it; but here will lie the great difference of the case, while they and their friends perish together, the *Philistims* without will rejoyce to make others the instruments to execute their designs.

2. *Not to be always complaining of their hardships and persecutions*; as though no People had suffer'd so much since the days of *Dioclesian*; whereas the severity of the Laws hath been temper'd with so much gentleness in the execution of them, that

that others have as much complained of *Indulgence*, as they of *Persecution*. It doth not look like the *Patience*, and *Humility*, and *Meekness* of the *Primitive Christians*, to make such noise and outcries of their suffering so much, when they would have been rather thankfull that they suffered no more. Is this the way to *Peace*, to represent their case still to the world in an exasperating and provoking manner? Is this the way to incline their *Governors* to more condescension, to represent them to the *People* as an *Ithacian persecuting Party*? Where are the *Priscillians* that have been put to death by their instigation? What do such insinuations mean, but that our *Bishops* are the followers of *Ithacius* and *Idacius* in their cruelty; and they of the good and meek Bishop *S. Martin*, who refused Communion with them on that account? If men do entertain such kind thoughts of themselves, and such hard thoughts of their *Superiours*, whatever they plead for, they have no inclination to *Peace*.

3. Not to condemn others for that which themselves have practised, and think to be lawfull in their own cases. What outcries have some made against the

the Church of England, as Cruel and Tyrannical, for expecting and requiring Uniformity? And yet do not such men, even at this day, contend for the Obligation of a Covenant, which binds men to endeavour after Uniformity in Doctrine, Discipline and Worship? But they want the ingenuity of Adonibezek, to reflect on the Thumbs and the Toes, which they have cut off from others; and think themselves bound to do it again, if it were in their power. Who could have been thought more moderate in this way, than those who went upon the principles of the dissenting Brethren? and yet we are assured, that even in New-England, when their own Church-way was by Law established among them, they made it no less than Banishment for the Anabaptists to set up other Churches among them, or for any secretly to seduce others from the approbation and use of Infant-baptism. And how they have since proceeded with the Quakers, is very well known. Nay, even these, notwithstanding the single Independency of every man's light within him, have found it necessary to make Rules and Orders among themselves to govern their Societies, to which they expect an uniform Obedience;

See Clark's
Narrative
of New-
England's
Persecuti-
on, A. D.
1651.

See Spirit
of the Har,
p. 12, &c.

dience; and allow no Liberty out of the Power and Truth; as they love to speak. From all which it appears, the true Controversie is not about the Reasonableness of Uniformity; but who shall have the Power of prescribing the Rules of it. Is it not now a very hard case, that the Church of England must be loaded with bitter reproaches, and exposed to the common hatred of all Parties for the sake of that, which every one of them would practise if it were in their Power; and think it very justifiable so to do?

104. Not to inflame the Peoples heats, by making their differences with the Church of England to appear to be greater than they are. Let them deal honestly and faithfully with them, by letting them understand that they look on our Churches as true Churches, and occasional Communion at least with them to be lawfull: (and it is hard to understand, if occasional Communion be lawfull, that constant Communion should not be a Duty.) This were the way to abate mens great prejudices, and to soften their Spirits, and to prepare them for a closer Union. But if instead of this, they endeavour to darken and confound things,

and

and cast mists before their eyes, that they cannot see their way clear before them; all understanding men will conclude, they prefer some little interests of their own, before the honour of *Christ* and the *Peace* of his *Church*.

5. *Not to harbour or foment unreasonable jealousies and suspicions in Peoples minds concerning us.* This hath been one of the most successfull arts of keeping up the distance and prejudices that have been so great among us, viz. by private whispers, by false suggestions, by idle stories, by unreasonable interpretation of words beyond the intention and design of those who spake them. By such devices as these, great mischief hath been done among us, and I am much afraid, is doing still. For nothing sets men at a greater distance from our *Church*, than the apprehending that we are not *heartly* and *sincere* in the *Protestant Cause*: which although it be a most groundless and malicious calumny, yet there have been some, who have had so little regard to *Conscience*, or *common Ingenuity*, as not only to charge particular *Persons*, but our *Church* it self with *Marching towards Popery*. What injustice, what uncharitableness,

what impudence is it, to fasten such an imputation upon a *Church* that hath hitherto continued (and long may it do so) the chief *Bulwark* of the *Protestant Cause*? Little do such Persons consider, how much they serve the design of our enemies, who cannot but be mightily pleased to find their most *formidable adversaries* represented to the People as their *secret Friends*.

6. *Not to run the hazard of all for a shew of greater Liberty to themselves.* For under this pretence our *Adversaries* endeavour to make them their *Instruments* to bring upon our Necks a *Yoke* which neither we nor our *Fathers* were able to bear. An *universal Toleration* is that *Trojan Horse*, which brings in our *enemies* without being seen, and which after a long *Siege* they hope to bring in at last under the pretence of setting our *Gates* wide enough open, to let in all our friends.

And then think with your selves what advantages they will have above others; considering some mens coldness and indifferency in Religion; others uncertainty and running from one extreme to another; others easiness in being drawn away by the hopes and fears of this world;

world; which have a wonderfull influence upon changing mens opinions, even when they do not think it themselves. So that those seem very little to understand mankind, who do not apprehend the dangerous consequences of a *general Toleration*.

Those who pretend there is no danger, *because by this means the Folly of their Religion will be exposed*, do not consider what a catching disease folly is; and how natural it is for men that are fancifull in Religion to exchange one folly for another. If all men were wise and sober in Religion, there would need no *Toleration*; if they are not, we must suppose, if they had what they wished, they would do as might be expected from men wanting Wisdom and Sobriety, *i. e.* All the several Parties would be striving and contending with each other, which should be uppermost, and gain the greatest interest.

And what would the fruit of all such contentions be, but endless disputes, and exposing the follies of one another, till at last *Religion* it self be sunk into the greatest contempt; or men, through mere weariness of contending, be willing even to submit to *Papal Tyranny*,

And verily you will keep up the Papists hope,

that by an universal
Toration, because it pretends to some kind of U-
nity?
they may at last come in on equal terms with you, or by con-
nivence, be endured as much as you. And if they be equal in
England with you, their transmarine advantages will make them
more than equal, notwithstanding their disadvantages in their
Cause, and their contrariety to Kingly Interest. *Baxter's last*
Answer to Bagshaw, p. 31.

So that, upon the whole matter, if
we would consult the *Honour of God*
and *Religion*, the *Peace and Tranquillity*
of the *Church* we live in; if we would
prevent the great *Designs* of our enemies,
and leave the *Protestant Religion* here
established to *Posterity*, we ought to
follow the *Apostle's Advice*, in walking
by the same Rule, and in minding the
same things.

SERMON VII.

OF

Protestant Charity

Preached at

St. Sepulchres Church,

On Tuesday

In Easter-week, 1681.

Gal. VI. 9.

*And let us not be weary in well-do-
ing; for in due season we shall
reap, if we faint not.*

WHen *Julian* the Apostate de- Sozom. l.
signed (if possible) to re- 5. c. 15.
trieve the honour of the
Heathen Religion, he easily discern'd
B b 4 that

Hist. Trip.
l. 6. c. 29.

that it was not enough for him to restore the Priesthood, to open the Temples, to appoint the Sacrifices to be offer'd upon the Altars; but he found it necessary for them to imitate the Christians in the strictness of their Lives, in the solemnity of their Devotions, in the exactness of their Discipline, and especially in the erecting Hospitals and taking care of the Poor. For he that would not believe the Christian Religion to be from God, thought himself bound to give some probable account, how a Religion so contrary to the Interests and Designs of this World, should be able to prevail against all the arts and power of its many and potent Enemies; and upon the deepest search which could be made by himself, or the greatest Wits of the Heathens then about him, they concluded the flourishing and propagation of it to be chiefly owing to those things which he so much commended to the Heathens imitation. And from hence they inferred, that if the same things could be brought into practice among the Gentiles, they should be able to supplant Christianity by its own methods, and restore Paganism by the same

same Weapons by which it was overthrown. This was thought so subtle and artificial a device by him whose great design was to extirpate our Religion in a soft and gentle manner, without the blood and cruelty of former times, that he writes an Epistle on purpose to *Arsacius* the chief Priest of *Galatia*, requiring punctual observance of these Commands; and as to the chargeable and expensive part, he offer'd large provisions out of his own Revenue to defray it.

But Saint *Paul* had been beforehand with him in *Galatia*, having planted Churches with great success there; and Christianity, by his means, took so deep root in mens hearts, that neither the rage and fury of former Persecutions, nor the plausible arts and insinuations of *Julian* were able to root it out. It is true, that these Churches, soon after their planting, were in great danger of being over-run by the pernicious Errors of some Seducers of that time; (the apprehension whereof put St. *Paul* into that astonishment which he expresseth in the beginning of this Epistle, *I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the Grace of Christ*

Gal. 1. 6.

unto

unto another Gospel, &c.) yet by the early notice and care which he took to prevent the spreading of these corruptions among them, the *Galatian Churches*, recover'd the soundness of their Faith, and have preserved a name among the Eastern Churches, though under great variety of conditions, to this day. Some take notice, that this is one of the sharpest *Epistles* written by *St. Paul*. He appears indeed, by the beginning of it, to have been much surpris'd and moved at the news of a great and sudden alteration among them; which he was sure was not for the better. And by this plain dealing with them, he knew, till they consider'd better, they would be offended with him; but withal he tells them this did best become a *Servant of Christ*, who, like a good Physician, hath more regard to the Disease than to the

Gal. 1. 10. *Palate of his Patient; For if I yet pleased Men, I should not be the Servant of Christ.*

Ch. 1, 2. But having vindicated his own honour, which the evil reports of the false Apostles made necessary; and argued with great strength and conviction against the imposers of the Law; he betakes himself to the enforcing the practice of the general and necessary Duties

Ch. 3, 4.
part of 5.

ties of *Christianity* upon these *Galatians*. If they had such a mind to keep the Law, *All the Law*, saith he, *is fulfilled* Gal. 5. 14. *in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self.* It was a vain and foolish thing for them to contend about keeping the Law, who did overthrow the main design of it, by their heats and animosities against each other; which, instead of preserving the honour of the Law, was the certain way to destroy one another. *But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.* From hence he shews, that *hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,* are as much *the lusts of the flesh,* as *adultery, fornication, murther, drunkenness, revellings, and such like;* and as destructive to mens Salvation; *of the which,* saith he, *I tell you now, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* And they that are true Christians *must crucifie the flesh with all the affections and lusts thereof;* such as vain-glory, love of contention, envying the reputation of others. *Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.* But the Apostle did

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did not think the design of the Law, or the obligation of Christianity was satisfied with abstaining from doing injuries to others; therefore he proceeds to tell them what exercise of tenderness, compassion and readiness to do good to others were expected from them by the Law of Christ.

(1.) If a man, through the frailty of humane Nature, or the sudden surprise of a Temptation, be overtaken in a fault, do not, saith he, trample upon him, nor insult over him; but endeavour *with the spirit of meekness* to recover him from his fall; considering that we carry about us the same load of flesh, and are exposed to continual Temptations our selves.

Gal. 6. 1.

(2.) If we see others groaning under the heavy burthen of their own infirmities, or the pressures and calamities of the world, do not add more weight to their afflictions; but put your own shoulders under to bear a part with them, to make their burthen more easie to them; for herein lies a great deal of that duty which Christ hath laid on all his Disciples. *Bear ye one anothers burthens, and so fulfill the Law of Christ.*

6. 2.

(3.) If

(3.) If it be impossible for men to attend the service of your Souls and the affairs of this World together, never grudge nor repine at the exercise of your kindness and liberality towards your spiritual Teachers, *v. 6. Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things.* Which instances being mention'd, the Apostle subjoyns two things:

1. A general Proposition, *viz.* That every man shall receive in another World according to the good that he doth in this. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of his flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting: i. e.* He that looks only after his present advantage in this world, and dares not venture to do any thing out of hopes of recompence for it in another life, he is said to *sow to his flesh*; but he that is good and charitable and kind to others without hopes of any other advantage than what God will give him for it, is said to *sow to the spirit*; the *flesh* and *spirit* being opposed as the two Centres of the different worlds: the great thing

Gal. 6. 6,

6. 7.

6. 8.

to

to which all things tend in this world being something carnal or that relates to the *Flesh*; and the great principle of another world being wholly spiritual. And these two *Flesh* and *Spirit* are placed as two Loadstones drawing our hearts several ways; the one is much stronger, but at a greater distance; the other hath less force in it self but is much nearer to us, by which means it draws more powerfully the hearts that are already touched with a strong inclination to it. But the Apostle useth the similitude of two Fields, wherein the product of the Seed answers to the nature of the Soil; *so he that sows to the flesh, i. e.* that minds only his present interest in this world, his harvest shall be proportionable to his seed, he may reap advantages to himself in this world suitable to his pains and industry; but the utmost this world can yield is but of a short continuance, being of a temporary, transient corruptible nature, *he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the spirit, i. e.* hath so great a regard to the rewards of another life, that he is willing to let go a present enjoyment and bury it under ground, casting it in as seed

seed into the earth in hopes of a future resurrection, however he may be condemned as a weak and improvident man by the men of this world, yet as certain as there is a life everlasting to come, so certainly shall all his good deeds yield an abundant increase and meet with a glorious recompence then, if there be no corrupt mixture in the sowing which may spoil the vertue of the seed, *for he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.* And let not men deceive themselves; if they look only at themselves and the things of this world, let their pretences be never so spiritual, if they dare not do acts of Charity so as to trust God for a reward, they do but *sow to the flesh*; and though the world may be cheated, and men may sometimes deceive themselves, yet *God cannot be mocked*; he knows the hearts and intentions, and secret designs of men, and according to them their reward shall be; *for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap.* This I take to be the natural and genuine meaning of the Apostle in those words.

2. A particular exhortation, not to be discouraged in well doing, which is the same with *sowing to the spirit* before,
and

- and with *doing good* in the following verse, both which are to be understood of the Works of Charity; and therefore we ought to take it in that sense here. These are especially called *good Works* in the new Testament; *Dorcas* Act. 9. 36. is said to be a *Woman full of good Works and Alms-deeds which she did*. The Widow that was to be taken into Office in the Church, must be *well reported of* 1 Tim. 5. 10. *for good Works*; and these presently follow, *the bringing up children, the lodging strangers, washing the Saints feet and relieving the afflicted*. In the *Epistle to Titus*, Saint Paul gives him a strict Tit. 3. 8. charge, that he deliver it with great assurance (*διαβεβαιῶν*) that they which believe in God might be careful to maintain good Works; these things are good and profitable unto men; Where the same word is used in the Greek, that is in the words of the Text. And to the same purpose other words of a like signification are used, as *ἐντολὴν*, *To do good and to communicate* forget not; and *ἀγαθοποιεῖν*, Charge them that are rich in this world—that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate. That ye may abound to every good Work, saith St. Paul; which he

he after explains, by *being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness*. So that although *well-doing* in the general may extend to every good action, yet by the particular sense of that phrase in the New Testament, and especially from the coherence of these words with the foregoing and following verses, it appears that the *well-doing* here spoken of, is to be understood of *Works of Charity*. Which the *Apostle*, as they were Christians, did suppose them to practise, but being apprehensive lest the discouragements they met with in the world, should make them grow cold and remiss in this great duty, he therefore exhorts them not to faint or grow weary of *doing it*; and to that end he lays down the most powerfull Motive and Consideration; *for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not*; i. e. ye shall not miss of a reward from God.

So that from the words we may take notice of these two things which deserve our consideration.

1. The many discouragements men meet with in the World, which are apt to make them grow weary in *well-doing*.

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2. The mighty encouragement which God gives to our continuance and perseverance in it; *for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.*

I. The many discouragements men meet with in the World, which are apt to make them grow *weary in well-doing.*

The Precepts of Charity deliver'd by our Saviour and his Apostles are so plain, so full, so many, so easie to be understood; and those Precepts enforced by so just, and reasonable, and pious considerations, with respect to God, to the World, to fellow Christians, to the honour of our Religion, and lastly to our selves, from the comfort that is in well-doing, and the reward that follows it; that a man must have great impudence, to profess himself a Christian, and yet to think himself not obliged to do acts of Charity. But notwithstanding all this, and much more which might be said to this purpose, there are too many still who are ready to find out some plausible pretences to excuse them from *well-doing*; which being the greatest discouragements to men from continuing in it; I shall make it my present business to examine them,

them, and to shew how little weight there is in them, especially being compared with the Authority of him who hath made this our duty, and the reward we may justly expect for performing it. And here I shall pass over the more common and trivial Objections, which every one can easily answer that makes them; and rather argue an unwilling mind to perform their duty, than one unsatisfied about the reasonableness of it; and I shall therefore insist on those that carry a greater appearance of strength in them; which are chiefly these two,

1. From the different *state* of our *Times* from those when these *Commands* of *Charity* were given.

2. From the sad prospect of our own *Affairs*, which seem rather to call for a *Care* of our selves than *Charity* to others.

1. The first pretence is from the *disference* of *Times*; "There was then, say
"such men, great reason for *Charity*
"which will not hold now; those were
"times of persecution for Religion, and
"many were driven to great streights
"and necessities on that account who
"deserved to be relieved, and the *Chri-*

" Christians had been worse than Infidels
 " not to do good to men that were
 " brought to want meerly for Christ's
 " and the Gospel's sake ; the Laws then
 " could take no care of these poor and
 " indigent persons ; for the Laws made
 " them so, being then opposite to Chri-
 " stianity : but now our Religion is
 " settled by the Laws ; and we have
 " many Laws made for a competent
 " provision for the poor, which will
 " be sufficient if they be put in execu-
 " tion, and if they be not, what Cha-
 " rity is this to relieve an idle and dis-
 " orderly sort of People who live up-
 " on Alms, when it is greater Chari-
 " ty to such to make them work and
 " to provide for their own subsistence ?

This is the force of the Objection
 which seems to have a great deal of
 strength and weight in it : but before I
 give an Answer to it I must acknow-
 ledge the truth of some things contain-
 ed therein.

(1.) That there is a great difference
 in the case of Charity, where our Re-
 ligion is settled by Law, and where it
 is persecuted by it. For a larger mea-
 sure and degree is justly required in a
 time of Persecution, in as much as those

are

are the truest Objects of Charity who prefer the keeping Faith and a good Conscience before the good things of this Life. And we ought to look upon it as an invaluable blessing, that we have the Christian, yea the Reformed Christian Religion settled by our Laws. And God grant it may ever so continue!

(2.) It cannot be denied that we have very good Laws for the maintenance of the Poor, and that they might be sufficient for their common necessities, if they were duly executed. And it is a very just and reasonable distinction which our Laws make between the involuntary Poor, who are made so by the hand of Heaven, either by Sickness, or Lameness, or Age, or Children, or Fire, &c. and the voluntary Poor, who may help themselves but will not, being idle, dissolute and dishonest persons. These deserve rather the hand of Justice to punish them than that of Charity to relieve them. For St. Paul himself is so far from thinking this to be true Charity, that he hardly thinks it so to keep such from starving if we take that Proverbial saying in its strict and literal sense, *If any would not work, neither should he eat.* 2 Thess. 3. 10.

(3.) I grant that it is greater Charity to put persons upon providing for themselves than to relieve their present necessities. For that is the greatest Charity which doth a man the most good. And he that reduceth a dissolute and wandering Beggar to the taking pains for himself and Family cures an ill habit of his Mind; puts him into the way of Vertue and Sobriety; gives him a lasting stock for himself and Family (for diligence and industry is so) keeps him out of the danger of the worst sort of Company; gains him more friends, who will be far more ready to help a person industrious in his Poverty than the most clamorous and importunate Beggar. And therefore our Laws have wisely determin'd, that Work-houses are the best Hospitals for the Poor, who are able to help themselves. But after these concessions, I am far from thinking the command of Charity to be swallowed up in our Laws for the relief of the Poor. For,

(1.) If our Laws were the best in the World for this purpose, yet, if they be not duly executed, they leave as much room for Charity as if there were none. What if a Law were made that there should

should be no Poor at all among us; but that immediate care should be taken, upon any man's falling into decay, that his Stock should be supplied out of the superfluities of the Rich; If this Law were not executed, men would be altogether as miserable in their Poverty, and as great Objects of Charity as if there were no such Law in being. For the making of a Law for their supply without putting it in execution, is but like the Person in St. James, who said *Jam. 2. 16.* *to those who were naked and destitute of daily food, be ye warmed and filled; but notwithstanding gave them nothing needfull for the Body; what doth this profit?* What advantage or satisfaction is it to a Man to starve with the Law on his side? Or can men be better fed or cloathed with the Words of a Law than of any particular Person? If not, then if care be not taken for the relief and maintenance of the Poor according to the Laws, there is as great need of Charity as if there were none at all.

(2.) If we suppose the Laws for relief of the Poor to be duly executed, yet there are many particular cases of Charity which often happen which the

Laws cannot be supposed to provide for. The Law takes care only of general, and notorious, and common cases; but there are continual Instances of singular and extraordinary cases where relief is as much wanted, but is rarely challenged. How often is some men's Reputation a snare to themselves and Families; who had rather sink silently into the gulf of Misery, than have their wants made known to their insulting neighbours, among whom they have lived in as good fashion as themselves. How many have been tempted rather to put an end to a miserable Life than to be despised and contemned for their Poverty in their old Age! How many are unwilling to make known their condition for fear of a repulse and being thought Liars, or impudent and common Beggars! How hardly will some pinch themselves and Families, before they will make known their necessities! and some have been known to have brought themselves so low, that when their sad condition hath been discovered, they have been past all possibility of recovery. I hope such Instances are not frequent among us. And yet we are lately

ly told in Print by a Member of this City, *That he hath reason to believe many hundreds have perished through want of late years.* If this be true, and their case was known; what a shame and dishonour is it, in the midst of so much plenty and luxury, to suffer such a reproach to Christianity to be among us? But if their case were not known in time; the stain is not quite wiped off, because there ought to be in so great, so rich, so well governed a City, a due care taken to find out as well as to relieve the truly necessitous.

Proposals for Employment of the Poor, p. 29. 1681.

(3.) The obligations of Charity reach much farther than the force of our Laws doth. For how small a matter within this City doth answer the Letter of the Law, where Persons enjoy very great and plentiful Estates? And is that all which their thankfulness to God, their love to their Brethren, and the regard to our Saviour's Commands will draw from them? Is this being mercifull as our heavenly Father is mercifull? Is this giving our Alms in secret, that thy Father which seeth in secret may reward thee openly? Is this making to our selves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness? Is this being rich towards God; being rich

Luk. 6. 36.

Matt. 6. 4.

Luk. 16. 9.

22. 21.

2 Tim. 6.

in 18.

in good works, being ready to distribute,
 Gal. 6. 10. *willing to communicate ? Is this doing good*
 Matt. 25. *to all men as we have opportunity ? Is this*
 35, 36. *feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked,*
visiting the sick and imprison'd ? Can we
imagine that will be a good answer at
the great day, that we have paid our
Rates to the Poor ? If the Christian Cha-
rity had extended no farther, Julian
needed not have been so solicitous to
have the Heathens equal them ?

The true Charity of Christians is a free and voluntary thing, not what men are forced to do by the Laws; It is a largeness of mind, that disposeth men to do good to others, and embraceth every opportunity for that purpose; It is the flowing of a Fountain which runs freely, easily and constantly; and not like the pouring water out of a narrow mouthed Vessel, where but little comes, and with a great deal of noise. Charity spreads it self like the beams of the Sun, and warms and enlivens the colder parts of the Earth; it pierceth into the bowels of it, and makes it self a passage to those secret and hidden objects which are out of the view of the World. True Christian Charity hath arms so large to comprehend the whole World within them;

them; but it is the Life and Spirit of that Body whereof Christ is the Head; it passeth from one Member to another, emptying it self from the larger vessels into the less, and so by a constant motion and course through the Body it keeps heat and union in all the Parts. To do good because one cannot help it, is to obey the Law of Necessity and not of Charity. He that resolves to go no farther in Charity than the Law requires him, declares he would not have gone so far unless the Law had forced him; which is in effect to tell the World, he hath not so much as an inclination to Charity.

(4.) Our Laws give great encouragement to the best, the noblest, the most lasting Works of Charity; such as erecting Work-houses for the Poor that are able to work, endowing Hospitals and Alms-houses for the impotent, distemper'd and aged Poor; setting up Free-Schools for the Education of Youth. And I never yet met with any Objection against these that will not hold against the best designs in the World. For it is possible they may be abused, and may accidentally prove an occasion of Idleness to some Persons, and they may

Stat. de
39. Eliz.
c. 5. & 21.
Jac. c. 1.
14. Car. 2.
c. 9. Co. 2.
Instit. 723.

may exceed the due proportion of Persons fit for them, (although we yet see no great danger of that.) Yet what design can the wit of Man pitch upon in a captious and suspicious Age, that will not meet with Objections from those that have a mind to cavil? The best Religion in the World, the best Church, the best Government, the best Laws, the best Men cannot escape the censures of ill minded Men; and why should we think the best designs of Charity should? But some men whose minds are set upon one particular way of Charity, are apt to disparage all other ways to advance their own: which is the common Error of Mankind, to think sufficient Right is not done to the thing they admire, unless they undervalue all other things in comparison with it. But it is a part of Charity to allow, approve and encourage all true ways of Charity; not to set up bodily Labour against the improvement of the Mind; nor the learning of Arts and Sciences to the disparagement of breeding men up for Trade and Business; nor to cry down Hospitals and Infirmarys for the Lame and Sick and Aged in comparison of Work-houses for the Young and Strong and

and Healthfull. For all these are excellent and most commendable ways of Charity, and have nothing of contradiction or inconsistency with one another, if they do answer the ends of their Institution. I do not go about to lessen the esteem of casual and occasional Acts of Charity done to particular Persons in present Want; when our Blessed Saviour in the midst of all his Poverty took care of the *Poor*, for when he spake to *Judas* at the Table, the Disciples supposed it was *that he should give something to the Poor*. What admirable Charity was this, when he had not whereon to lay his head, and was at the expence of a Miracle to give an entertainment to the People, yet he had an Officer, one of his own Apostles, to take care of the *Poor*! And when he pronounceth such Blessedness to those who do Acts of Charity to them, and accounts them *as done unto himself*; Joh. 13. 29. Matt. 25. 34. 40. which is the highest expression of his gracious acceptance of such Acts from us, and of the great obligation that lies upon us to do them; since we ought not to think much of any thing we do for the honour of our Lord and Saviour, who did and suffer'd so much for our

our sakes: Yet when we compare these with the publick Works of Charity before mention'd, being done for the same end; we shall find these to exceed the other in some material circumstances, which add much to the excellency of them.

(1.) In the Largeness and Extensiveness of their design. Other Charities are for the present relief of some poor and indigent Persons, whose bowels are refreshed, and backs are clothed, and hearts are eased, by the kindness of others to them; but these are soon gone, and men's Charity cannot follow them beyond the Grave. But publick endowments of Charity are to last for ever, and do good to the Poor of many Generations. The Ages to come will rise up and bless their Memory who took care to do good to those whom they never saw; and to provide for such, yea very many such, whom it was impossible for them to know. When a man sees a great object of Charity, as the Widow and Fatherless under extreme necessities, the Mother weeping and bemoaning her Children not having bread to put into their Mouths, and the poor Children looking ghastly and frightfully

fully crying for want of bread, but not knowing where to get it, the very uneasiness of a man's own mind at the sense of so much misery in others, will extort some present relief to still their cries, and to put such an unpleasing Idea out of his Fancy. But if the Object it self do not move, yet importunity may : if that doth not, yet custom, reputation, natural humanity, recommendation of Friends may prevail on men to be sometimes liberal to Persons whom they see under present Wants. But how much doth all this fall short of a fixed, certain, perpetual provision for the necessities of those, whom none of those Arguments could excite men to shew kindness to? The other is a more sensible, natural, private Charity ; this is a more rational, generous Christian Charity ; being built upon more free, and noble, and lasting considerations, most agreeable to the design and honour of the Christian Religion, which puts men upon doing the best things and which tend to the greatest benefit and advantage of mankind. And in the comparison of things that are good, the largest, the most publick, the most lasting ought to have the pre-eminence.

(2.) In

(2.) In their Consequence and Usefulness; which ought to be especially regarded in Acts of Charity. For true Charity must be accompanied with Wisdom and Discretion. It is not a man's profuse liberality to every one that asks; nor making himself poor to make others rich; it is not squandering away an Estate among idle and indigent Persons, that makes him a charitable man; but it is a wise dispensing the Gifts God hath bestowed upon him for the benefit and advantage of others. And the greater the Good is that is received the greater is the Charity in bestowing it. The Schoolmen reckon up seven sorts of Corporal Alms, and as many of Spiritual; *to visit the sick, to feed the hungry, to satisfy the thirsty, to cloath the naked, to redeem the captive, to entertain the stranger, to bury the dead;* are the former: *to teach the ignorant, to advise the doubtfull, to comfort the sorrowfull, to correct the wicked, to forgive the injurious, to bear the troublesome, to pray for all;* are the Instances of Spiritual Charity. But this is rather a distribution of the different sorts of Charity, than any just Rule and Measure of our obligation to the Acts of it. For although

*Visito, poto,
cibo, redi-
mo, tego,
colligo,
condo.*

*Consule, ca-
stiga, so-
lave, re-
mitte fer-
ora.*

*2. 2. Q. 2.
art. 2.*

though in the general, spiritual Acts of Charity to mens Souls, are to be preferred before what refers only to their Bodies; yet in particular cases a man may be more obliged to relieve their outward necessities than to give them good counsel for their Souls; *i. e.* when those necessities are urgent and pressing, and by a present supply they may have longer time and be in better disposition to receive spiritual Advice. Some dispute if a bad man be in greater want, and a good man in less want, which of these two is to be preferred? And the Casuists say, *The Work of Mercy* is greater in the former Case, but *the Work of Charity* in the latter. For *Mercy* only relates to another's misery; but *Charity* takes in other considerations. So I say, when the competition lies between the present supply of some in great want, and making a lasting provision for more persons in less want, there may be more *Mercy* in the former case, but there may be greater *Charity* in the latter: because the more publick, the more common, the more usefull the Good is, the greater the *Charity* is in doing of it. I will not dispute, whether the breeding up of youth

Cajet. in 2.
2. Q. 32.
art. 4.

to Learning or Labour be among us the greater *Charity*? I know no reason why two such excellent ways of *Charity* should be set at variance with each other. But certainly we are not to judge of mens usefulness to the publick merely by the strength of their limbs, or the hardness of their hands, or the nimbleness of their fingers. Is it not possible that by the charitable education of Children in the ways of Learning and Knowledge some may arrive at a greater capacity of serving God and their Country, than if they had been grinding in a Mill, or tugging at an Oar all that while? It is not only keeping People to hard labour, or to continual working, which is the design of *Charity*; but the most excellent way of *Charity*, is to improve all Persons according to their several Capacities, so as to make them more usefull and serviceable to the Publick. This is not only *doing Good* to the particular persons, but to the whole Nation; and *Charity* is not barely to be measured by the quality of its Acts, but by the largeness of the circumference it fills. The breeding up some few great and usefull Persons to a Nation is a Work
of

of Charity the publick Good is more concerned in, than in the manual labours of many industrious Artificers: who do serve the Publick too in their way; but there is a difference between those lesser Stars in the Firmament, that wanted a Telescope to discover them, and those great and splendid Bodies which influence the Earth, and direct mens passage in the deep Waters. That is therefore the greatest and most usefull Charity, which tends to the improving mankind according to their different Capacities; some for Labour, others for Trade, others to be usefull to the rest of mankind with a respect either to their Country or to their Estates, their Bodies or their Souls: And which takes all possible care to prevent the unspeakable and innumerable mischiefs which idleness and debauchery do bring upon mankind.

(3.) In the Honour they bring to Religion. There are some cases, wherein our Charity must be so secret, that *our left hand must not know what our right hand doth*, i. e. when there is danger of vanity and ostentation in the doing of our Alms; but when the honour of God and Religion is concerned, then

Matt. 6. 3.

Matt. 5. 16. *let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good Works, and glorifie your Father which is in heaven.* But how can men see those Acts of Charity which are done in secret, and are industriously concealed from the knowledge of men? And if that were to be taken as a strict command in all cases, then all the publick Works of Charity, which are most considerable for the Honour of God and Religion would be forbidden by the Gospel. But where men do excellent and praise-worthy things for great and good ends, without Pharisaical Hypocrisie, it is the general concernment of Religion and the glory of God not to have such things kept from

Joh. 15. 8. *the knowledge of the World. For herein, saith our Saviour, is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my Disciples.* So shall ye appear to be my Disciples, for Christ had owned them for his Disciples before, but this would manifest their being so to the World; which would bring the greatest honour to God and to the Christian Religion. And it is certain nothing did more advance the reputation of it in the World, than their singular and extraordinary care of the Poor. For they not only

only relieved in the first place those that were Christians, according to the Apostle's rule in the next Verse; especially to those of the House-hold of Faith; but their Charity extended to the very Heathens: which Julian takes notice of with great Indignation: *Is it not a shame for us not to relieve our own poor, when the Christians not only take care of their own but of ours too?* And by the case of *Lucian's Peregrinus*, it appears, that some pretended to be Christians on purpose that they might be partakers of the great bounty and kindness which the Christians shewed to their Brethren. But such instances as these did not make them weary in well-doing; but still as the Church increased in Riches by the free and large oblations of the People; so greater care was taken for the erecting Hospitals for the reception of the Poor, who could provide no habitation for themselves; and this was then always looked on as a particular concernment of Religion, and not as a mere political Constitution.

Thus the matters of Charity stood in the Christian Church, till men came to be perswaded that by the Priest's saying so many Prayers for the dead, their

Souls might be removed out of Purgatory and translated to Heaven. And when this notorious Cheat prevailed, the stream of mens Charity was diverted from the Poor, to the making good bargains for their Souls. And who could blame men who had spent all their days in Wickedness, or raised an Estate by Fraud and Oppression, if at their death they took care to leave enough to have so many Masses said for their Souls, as might by a reasonable computation serve for their Redemption out of Purgatory at a marketable Price. When the laying open these Cheats to the World, gave the first occasion to the Reformation, a mighty out-cry was every-where made, that the Foundation of all good Works was destroyed, and if the Reformation prevailed there would be no want of Faith, when every one might chuse what he pleased, but nothing like Charity was to be expected. To remove the former Calumny, our Reformers published the Articles of our Religion; and to take away the latter, they put that admirable Prince *Edward* the Sixth upon the new founding the famous *Hospitals* of this *City*, (for although there were some *Hospitals* before,

fore, such as *St. Mary Betlehem, Elsyng Spittal, St. Bartholomew's*, yet they were inconsiderable in comparison of what they have been since.) For by the care and Charity of the Governors and other Members of the City, they have yielded a wonderfull support to a mighty number of poor Children, and wounded and diseased Persons both in Body and Mind; which being joyned with another *Foundation of one single Person*, this *City* may justly vye with any other in the Christian World as to so many and so great Foundations, for the best kind of Christian Charity, in the Education of Youth and the Care of the Impotent and Diseased.

Our Religion teacheth us better, than to have so vain and fond an opinion of our good Works as to think we *merit* Heaven by them; but surely our Charity is so much the greater, if we do these things out of a sense of gratitude to God, than if we think to drive a bargain with him, and put our imperfect Works in the balance with an infinite and eternal Reward. Those of the Church of *Rome* may think they carry on a better Trade with Heaven than we do; and that they have a mighty

advantage in the ~~overbalance~~ of what
 they hope for in exchange for what they
 part with; but they had best look well
 to the stating their Accounts, the due
 value of their Works, and the reason of
 expecting such a disproportionable re-
 turn; lest at last they deceive them-
 selves, and totally fail of their expecta-
 tions: For in the great day of account,
 all things will be most exactly weighed;
 and although the greatest Benefactors
 rejoyce in the highest Acts of *Kindness*,
 yet when any thing is challenged in a
 way of *Justice*, men do not love to be
 imposed upon or over-reached in a Bar-
 gain. What madness then is it, for any
 sinfull Creatures to hope that any Acts
 of theirs, being weighed by divine Ju-
 stice, can bear any proportion in a way
 of *Merit*, with no less than the King-
 dom of Heaven? This we utterly dis-
 claim, and owe all our hopes of Heaven
 merely to the infinite Goodness and
 Mercy of God through his Son Christ
 Jesus: and yet we think our selves ne-
 ver the less bound *to be fruitfull in good*
Works; because we hereby testifie our
 obedience to the Laws of Christ; our
 sincere love to God and our Brethren;
 our readiness to do good to others by the
 the

the mercies which God hath bestowed upon us; our sense of the obligation we have to one another, as partaking of the same nature, and liable to the same infirmities, and exposed to the same calamities; our expectation of a blessed reward, though not due to the merit of our Works, but to the infinite Grace and Mercy of God. And I do not see, but where men have a due regard to God and Religion, such considerations as these do more effectually stir men up to true Acts of Charity, than those mercenary and corrupt Doctrines in the Roman Church; which look rather like cunning devices to pick the Peoples Pockets than any real Arguments for Charity. And upon a carefull examination, it hath been found, that our *Protestant Doctrine* was so far from stopping up the Channel that ran so freely before, that within sixty years after the *Reformation* more great and noble Works of Charity were done in founding of *Schools* and *Hospitals*, than for some hundreds of years before; and some say from the *Conquest* till that time of the *Reformation*. But this I have formerly insisted more upon, on the like Occasion.

The

The summ of what I have said is this, that we have no reason to be *weary in well doing*; on the account of our Laws for the common relief of the Poor; because those Laws cannot provide for all cases of Charity; and because they do suppose the greatest Works of Charity to depend upon the largeness and freeness of those mens minds to whom God gives a heart to do great and worthy things with the Estates he hath given to them.

2. But there is another plausible pretence yet behind, *viz.* from the consideration of our own Times. "Were the times calm and fixed; had we a fair prospect of things before us, that were a great encouragement to Charity; but we live in perplexed and doubtful times and know not what may become of us all; mens minds are strangely discompos'd and full of Fears; and therefore this is a very unseasonable Time to perswade them to Charity, when they ought rather to lay up and secure something against an evil day.

To which I answer,

1. What times were those the Primitive Christians lived in, who so much abounded

abounded in Charity? *St. Paul* tells us of himself and his Brethren, *they were* ^{1 Cor. 4. 11, 12, 13.} *hungry and thirsty, naked and buffeted, having no certain dwelling-place; labouring, working with their own hands, reviled, persecuted, defamed; and yet nothing relating to this World was so much their care and concernment as providing for the Poor.* For when he went up to *Jerusalem*, and there conferred with *James, Cephas and John*, at his departure ^{Gal 2. 9. 10.} they had nothing to desire of him and *Barnabas, but to remember the Poor, the same which I also was forward to do;* as *St. Paul* relates it. And you may see how earnest he was in it, by his dealing with the *Corinthians*, when he per- ^{2 Cor. 8. 9. ch.} swades them to a liberal contribution to the poor Christians in *Judea*, who then suffer'd much either through Famine or Persecution or both. *St. Paul* had undertaken for the *Churches of Achaia*, (of which *Corinth*, being a populous and trading City, was the chief) but the *Collection* not being yet made among them, he sends some on purpose to *Corinth* to make all ready against his coming to them, and perswades them to great liberality in their giving: for which end he makes use of the most power-

2 Cor. 8.
1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

powerfull and prevailing arguments and great arts of insinuation. (1.) He sets before them the Example of the *Churches of Macedonia*; which is truly a very extraordinary instance of Christian Charity. They were under great trouble and deep poverty at that time themselves, yet understanding by *St. Paul* this occasion of more than ordinary Charity, they not only straitned themselves even beyond their abilities, but did it with that chearfulness and satisfaction of mind, that they intreated the *Apostle* to accept of what they had given, and to undertake the managing of so good a Work. And *St. Paul* seems to speak of it with a kind of transport, *Moreover, Brethren, we do you to wit of the Grace of God bestowed on the Churches of Macedonia; how that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality; for to their power I bear record, yea and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the Saints.* Nothing can be added to the weight of these words and the *Emphasis* wherewith they are penned. (2.) He lets them know

know what a shame and reproach it would be to so famous a Church for other Divine Gifts to come behind others in Charity. Therefore as ye abound in every thing, in faith, in utterance, in knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, (what artificial insinuations are these!) see that ye abound in this Grace also. (3.) But lest he should seem to press too hard upon them, he draws off again; *I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.* (4.) Yet he hath no sooner said this, but he comes on again with the most prevailing Argument taken from the example of our Blessed Saviour: *For ye know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor that ye through his poverty might be rich.* Can any thing be more moving to Christians than this? (5.) His design was not to lay a burthen upon them, but to excite mutual compassion in Christians to one another. (6.) This would be a demonstration to the World of their kindness to him, and that he had not spoken great things of them without cause. (7.) They might justly expect

2 Cor. 8. 7.

v. 8.

v. 9.

v. 13, 14.

- 2 Cor. 8. a retribution suitable to their Bounty;
 9. 6. ²⁴ But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; but he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.
 (8.) This would be the occasion of many thanksgivings and prayers to God for them. For the administration of this service, not only supplieth the want of the Saints, but is abundant also by many
 13. thanksgivings unto God. (Whilst by the experiment of this ministration they glorifie God for your professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men.)
 14. And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding Grace of God
 15. in you. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. Wherein he supposes the thing as already done, as believing it impossible for them to resist the force of so many Arguments. And yet all this while St. Paul supposes their condition to be such as in a little time they might stand in need of relief from others; which he thought was so far from being an Argument against present Charity, that he useth it the other way;
 3. 14. that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance may also be a supply for your want,
 i. e.

i. e. Do not consider what times may come upon your selves so as to hinder *doing good* while it is in your power to do it; leave those things to the wise Providence of God; if he think fit to reduce you to want, he that now excites your hearts to do good to them, will stir up others to make up the same measure to you. So that while the Christians either were under great persecutions, or in expectation of them, through the Power of the Magistrates, or the Rage of the People; yet the *Apostles* pressed them, and that with great success, to a free, chearfull, liberal contribution to relieve those who labour under greater wants than others.

2. This very consideration is used as an argument in *Scripture* to persuade men to *Charity*, viz. That we do not know what times may come upon us. *Give thy portion to seven and also to eight; Ecclef. 11. 2. for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.* This seems to the men of this World a strange way of reasoning, and it may be they suspect from hence that *Solomon* was not so wise a man as they took him to be. "What! "give away what one hath because one "knows not what times may come. "No

"No certainly, say they, we ought to
 "get what we can, and to save what
 "we have, for that reason. The difference of reasoning in this case proceeds upon the different Principles on both sides. Solomon believed a Divine Providence and they do not. And he thought that would be particularly concerned for the good of those, whom no sad prospect of Affairs could discourage from well-doing according to their Ability and Opportunity.

II. And so I come to the encouragement here given to patient continuance in well-doing; for, *in due season we shall reap if we faint not.* Wherein are three things considerable.

1. The certainty of a future recompence for well-doing. *We shall reap.*

2. The time of receiving it, not immediately, but *in due season.*

3. The condition supposed on our parts, which is continuance in well-doing. *If we faint not.* Some understand it as relating to the reward, that we shall receive it *without fainting*; reaping and harvest being a time of labour and sickness; but the more natural meaning of *μὴ ἐκλυσμενοι*, seems to be the taking

taking the participle, as implying the
consideration of our pasts.

The certainty of a future recom-
pense for well-doing. God is not unrighteous. Heb. 6. 10.

Such the Apostle, to forget your
work and labour of love, which ye have
showed towards his name; in that ye have
ministered to the Saints and do minister.

Though it be a work and labour, though
it may seem uneasy and troublesome
for a while; yet being a work and la-
bour of love; it is but the work and la-
bour of sowing, which a man goes through

the more cheerfully because he expects
a plentiful increase. He doth not reap
presently the very same which he sow-
ed; but a wonderful improvement of
it, when the seed being cast into a fruit-
full soil brings forth some thirty, some

sixty, some an hundred fold. And this
Harvest doth not depend upon the un-
certainty of the Weather; here are no
fears of blasting and mildew, or locusts

so prevent the joy full expectation of it;
no danger of the seed rotting in the
ground, or being pickt up by the fowls
of the air; but he that minstreth seed

to the sower, will multiply the seed sown,
and increase the fruits of their righteous-
ness. His Word is engaged that they

which

1 Cor. 9.
10.

Ec

which

"No certainly, say they, we ought to
 "get what we can, and to save what
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 it may seem uneasy and troublesome
 for a while; yet being a *work and la-
 bour of love*; it is but the *work and la-
 bour of sowing*, which a man goes through
 the more chearfully because he expects
 a plentiful increase. He doth not reap
 presently the very same which he sow-
 ed; but a wondrous improvement of
 it, when the seed being cast into a fruit-
 full soil brings forth *some thirty, some
 sixty, some an hundred fold.* And this
 Harvest doth not depend upon the un-
 certainty of the Weather; here are no
 fears of blinding and mildew, or locust
 so prevent the joyfull expectation of it;
 no danger of the seed rotting in the
 ground, or being pickt up by the fowls
 of the air; but *as that ministring seed
 to the sower, will multiply the seed sown,
 and increase the fruits of their righteousness.*
 His Word is engaged that they
 which

1 Cor. 9.
10.

which *few* shall reap a plentiful increase; and therefore God will not be ungracious in not performing his Promise. This men may certainly depend upon as that Night and Day shall follow each other; for *Heaven and Earth* may pass away, but the Word of God *endureth for ever*.

2. The time of this retribution, is *due season*. Most men are unwilling to trust God too long upon his bare Word; they would have something in hand, and the remainder hereafter. And God by the course of his wise Providence, doth very often order things so in this World that the most charitable men, although they may not abound with the greatest riches; yet generally meet with the fewest difficulties; and in their straits find more unexpected assistance than other men. *David* made it the observation of his own time, that in all his days though he was then grown old, he never saw the righteous, or the charitable man forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. And they have far more reason than other men to hope, that if they do fall into trouble and sickness, God will have a particular regard to them; and besides this, they have the natural

Pf. 37. 25.

41. 1. 3.

Sermon Seventh.

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natural, or rather spiritual contentment
than follows *doing good*; and they have
more satisfaction and ease in it, than
others have in hoarding up Wealth for
they know not whom. But none of
all these are the reaping here mention'd:
They are like *Ruth's* *gleaning of barley*. Ruth 2.16.
falls in the field of Boaz, which shew'd
a more than ordinary kindness; not-
withstanding which he said, *The Lord*
recompense thy work, and a full reward
be given thee of the Lord God of Israel,
under whose wings thou art come to trust.
So it is here, they may have better glean-
ings and fuller handfulls sometimes in the
common Field of Providence, but this
is not the full recompence which the
God of Mercy will give to those that
trust in his Word. That is only to be
expected at the great day when the
Lord, the righteous Judge shall say,
Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit Matt. 25.
the Kingdom prepared for you from the 34, 35, 36.
Foundation of the World. For I was
an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I
was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was
a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and
ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visit-
ed me; I was in prison, and ye came un-
to me. For in as much as ye have done

v. 40.

it is one of the least of those my Brethren
 ye have done in this way. O the infinite
 Goodness and unexpressible kindness of
 our Blessed Saviour, who in the day of
 Judgment will interpret all Acts of Cha-
 rity so much to the advantage of those
 that do them! Who would deny any
 thing to a Servant of that Lord, who
 takes all kindnesses to them as done to
 himself, and rewards them accordingly.
 What other apprehensions will co-
 verous and hard-hearted Wretches then
 have of their sordid penuriousness in
 heaping up riches, without any ten-
 derness or compassion to the necessities
 of their Brethren and Christ's represen-
 tatives? How will they wish ten thou-
 sand times, when it will be to no purpose
 to wish, that they had rather they had
 laid out their money in *doing good*, than
 laid it up for those who may go to
 Hell the sinner for the great Temptations
 they leave behind them. Neither
 let the prodigal Fools think they shall
 escape better, for being so contrary to
 the graying and singy humour of the
 devout, for it is not the vain and care-
 less squandering an Estate away in in-
 tuous nonsej will make a man's condi-
 tion more tolerable at that day; but it

Sermon Seventh.

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O 54

is the provident, seasonable, carefull distribution of our Charity for wise and good ends, which shall meet with so glorious a reward.

Especially, in the last place, *we faint not*, and do not repent of what good we have done, but continue to doing to the end of our Lives. For this reason I presume it is, that many reserve their greatest *Gifts of Charity* to their Deaths, but it is dangerous putting off their Repenting and doing Good till they come to die, for fear their hearts, or those whom they trust deceive them. But if men begin to do well in their health and strength, let them *not faint* when they come to die, but continue *charitable* as well as *faithful unto death*, and God will give them a crown of life.

And now my business is to make particular Application to this great Assembly *not to be weary in well-doing*; and therefore I shall repeat to you, *A true Report*, &c.

You perceive by this relation, how much Good hath been already done in the care of the Education of poor Children, and in the cure of and provision for the Maimed and Distracted, all

which are very commendable ways of well-doing, and it is a great advantage to me this Day, that I am only to persuade you not to be weary in well-doing, for in due season you shall reap if you faint not. You have already broke through many discouragements; and since the sad calamities of Plague and Fire, which made such desolations among us, you have done even as to these charitable Foundations, what hath been to the Admiration and Astonishment of beholders. Which of us all who saw the City in its Ruins, such so many Churches and Halls and Hospitals buried in its rubbish, could ever hope to have lived to see them rise again with a much greater Glory; and our new-built Hospitals to appear with that Magnificence, that strangers may easily mistake them for Palaces. We have lived in an Age that hath beheld strange Revolutions, astonishing Judgments, and wonderfull Deliverances; what all the Fermentations that are still among us may end in, God alone knows; our unanswerable returns to God for his great Mercies may justly make us fear, that he hath greater scourges provided for us; the best thing

we

we can do for our selves, is to amend our ways, and to bring forth fruits worthy of amendment of life; not barely to own and profess the *Protestant Religion*, but to adorn it, by holy and exemplary lives, and doing all the Good we can while we have opportunity. And to that end I shall offer these considerations, and so conclude.

1. The more Good ye do, the more Comfort you will find in the doing it. Therefore be not weary in well doing. There is a certain secret pleasure and inward satisfaction that follows *doing Good*; which endreases by exercise and continuance. This is so far above the pleasure of the Covetous and Voluptuous in pursuit of their ends, that it approaches nearest of any thing we can conceive, to the satisfaction of the Almighty, who delighteth in doing Good.

It was a remarkable saying of our Saviour, which St. Paul preserved, *It is more blessed to give than to receive.* A9. 20. 35.

How happy do the poor think themselves, when those who are Rich are bountifull to them! But the advantage is on your side; they are the receivers but you are the gainers. What you bestow on them you lay up in store for your selves; which

Ec 4 will

will yield far greater comfort with you
 come to die than having raised a vast
 Estate; for that is only carrying a great
 account into another World; but
 this is a great help to discharge in this
 life. Doing Good is really one of the
 best parts of our Religion. *True Reli-*
gion and undefiled before God and the Fa-
ther is this; to visit the Widow and Fa-
therless in their affliction, and to keep
himself unspotted from the World. It
 is not giving a gold formal visit to the
 Widow and Fatherless that makes any
 part of Religion; but doing all the good
 we can to them, by advice and coun-
 sel, by supplying their wants, and re-
 quiring care of their affairs. No Duty
 takes in so much of the substance of Re-
 ligion as true Charity. *It is the ful-*
filling of the Law; the end of the Com-
mandment, is of the Gospel, the bond
of perfecting. That, without which
 all other pretence to Religion is but
 flattering of God and mere hypocrisy.
 For all our Prayers and Praises are but
 verbal acknowledgments; that which
 he hath put the trial of our love to him-
 self upon; is our love to our Brethren.
For he that loveth not his Brother whom
he hath seen, how can he love God whom
he hath not seen?

3. Do-

Doing Good to others is taking the best care of our selves. We are very apprehensive of dangerous times, and very fearful what may become of us; the best course every wise and good man can take in difficult and uncertain times, is to do his own duty and to leave events to God. And there is no duty more unquestionable, more safe, more advantageous, to himself as well as to others, than *to do good*; to be kind and obliging to all, to forgive injuries, to reconcile enemies, to redeem captives, to visit the distressed, and according to our abilities and opportunities to relieve those that are in wants and necessities. This is the way to dwell safely, and to be quiet from the fear of evil; for as long as God governs the World, he will take care of those who commit themselves to him by *patient continuance in well-doing*.

Doing Good doth the most answer the obligations God hath laid upon you by the Mercies he hath vouchsafed to you.

And now give me leave to plead with you the Cause of the Poor and Fatherless Children; the Cause of the Wounded and Maimed, who cannot help

themselves, the Cause of those who de-
 serve so much more pity because they
 cannot pity themselves, being deprived
 of the use of their Understandings. If
 God hath provided well for you and
 for your Children, wherein can you
 better express your thankfulness for
 such a mercy than by your kindness
 and charity to those who are destitute
 of the means to make them Men. If
 you have reason to bless God for your
 good Education, shew it by taking care
 of theirs who may hereafter bless God
 for your kindness to them. If God
 hath blessed you with Riches and a
 plentiful Estate in this City, and raised
 you beyond your hopes and expectati-
 ons, what can you do more becoming
 the Members of this City than to be
 kind to the Children of those who have
 been such and reduced to Poverty? Re-
 member from what God hath raised
 you; do not think much to consider
 what you have been, as well as what
 you are. You can never take the just
 height of God's Mercies to you, unless
 you begin at the bottom; and let others
 measure your height now, as some have
 done that of the Pyramids, by the length
 of your shadow, by the refreshments they
 find

find under you. Think what God hath brought you to, and for what end; Was it for your own sakes, that you might be full, while others are empty; that you might win in abundance, while others are pinched with necessities? Was it not rather to make you his Conduit-Pipe to convey blessings and comforts to others through your means? When you are in health and at ease, then think of the miserable condition of those who lie in Hospitals under aches and pains and sores, having nothing to comfort them, but the Charity of good People to them. They cannot represent their own condition to you, being unable to come abroad to do it. Be ye good Samaritans to the wounded and hurt, bind up their wounds with your kindness, and help to defray the charges of their cures. This is loving our neighbour as our selves, and that is fulfilling the Law, and the great design of the Gospel. Lastly, when you think what a blessing it is that you do enjoy the use of your Reason and Understanding, pity the poor Creatures whom God hath deprived of it. How easily, how justly, how suddenly may God cast you into their Condition?

Shew

Shew the esteem that you have of this Mercy of God to your selves, by the freeness of your Charity to those that want it. Therefore I conclude in the Words of the Text, *Let us be ready in any of these ways of well-doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.*

Nature of Superstition.

Prescribed in

St. Dunstan's Well.

MDCCLXXXII

Coloss. II. 17.

Coloss. II. 17.

Coloss. II. 17.

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Coloss. II. 17.

Coloss. II. 17.

Coloss. II. 17.

Coloss. II. 17.

Coloss. II. 17.

Coloss. II. 17.

Coloss. II. 17.

Coloss. II. 17.

show the esteem that you have of this
Blessing of God to your Religion, by the
presence of your Church, to those that
worship it. Therefore I conclude in the
text, that the way of well-doing is
in the way of these ways of well-doing is
in the way of these ways of well-doing is

SERMON VII. OF THE Nature of Superstition.

Preached at
St. Dunstons West.

March 31, MDCLXXXII.

Coloss. II. 23.

Which things have indeed a shew of
wisdom in will-worship, and humi-
lity, and neglecting of the body,
not in any honour to the satisfying
of the flesh.

Saint Paul was now a Prisoner at
Rome for the sake of the Gospel,
when he wrote this Epistle to the
Colossians, but his mind was at liberty;
And

Coloss. 1. 1.

And the compass of his thoughts and cares was so far from being confined within the Walls of a Prison, that it reached not only to the Churches of Asia planted by himself, as those of Ephesus and Galatia; but to those which had never seen him, as the Colossians and Laodiceans. *For, such be, I would that you knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.* Had not he trouble enough with the Churches of Rome and Greece, and those he had conversed with in other parts, but he must take upon him to interpose in the affairs of those Churches he had never seen? But such was the largeness of the Apostle's mind, the fervour of his Zeal, the extent of his Charity, that the care of all the Churches was upon him; but especially those which had been planted by his means, although not by his personal endeavours; among which, in all probability, this of the Colossians was one. For this Epaphras whom St. Paul calls a faithful Minister of Christ to them, was employ'd as an Evangelist under him; and particularly in the Cities of Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse, which were

not

not far distant from each other in *Phry-*
gia; and for the Churches there settled,
S. Paul testifies, that he had a mighty
 zeal and concernment: From whence
 it arose, that hearing of *S. Paul's* im-
 prisonment at *Rome*, he resolves to take
 a Journey thither to acquaint him with
 the State of those Churches, and to de-
 sire his Advice and Direction in the pre-
 sent danger they were in, of being so-
 duced from the simplicity of the Go-
 spel, by the plausible insinuations of
 false Teachers, who pretended to give
 them a more refined System of Reli-
 gion, by a composition of Law and
 Gospel and Philosophy all together.
S. Paul understanding by him the dan-
 gerous circumstances they were in, al-
 though *Epaphras* himself was made a
Fellow-Prisoner with him; as appears
 by the *Epistle to Philemon*, sent at the *Philem. 23*
 same time with this; yet he finds means
 by *Tychicus* and *Oncimus* to convey this
 Epistle to them. Wherein by an admi-
 rable art of insinuation, far above the
 eloquent exordiums of the Heathen O-
 rators, he lets them understand, how
 passionately he was concerned for their
 welfare; and what an *Agony* he suffer-
 ed in his own breast for their sakes,
 lest

Coloss. 2.
3, 3.

V. 4.

V. 5.

V. 6.

left under some artificial colours, and every fair pretences, they should be drawn off from the Love and Unity and Sincerity of the Gospel. For, since he had told them what counsel he had for them, that had not seen his face in the flesh, he immediately adds, that it was, that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the Mystery of God, and of the Father and of Christ. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And when he hath thus set forth the excellency and sufficiency of the Gospel, he then lets fall an intimation of his design, And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. But, lest they should suspect some hints that ill offices had been done them, and they had been misrepresented to S. Paul; in the next verse he tells them, that at that distance, he did rejoice, beholding their order, and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ. And therefore exhorts them, as they had received Christ Jesus the Lord, so to walk in him: i.e. to adhere to that faith which they at first embraced; as he explains it, in the seventh Verse.

Y^e *Learning* thus removed all Je-
 hovah's *Sanctity* as to their present
Religion, the *doctrines* *convinced* ad-
 versaries *convinced* in giving them
causes *against* the *most* dangerous and
occasional *Discourse* *Discourse* *left* *by* *man*
fold *you* *through* *Philosophy* *and* *reason*
and *after* *the* *Tradition* *of* *man*, *after*
the *Tradition* *of* *the* *World*, *and* *not* *af-*
ter *Christ*. Not as though there were
 the least prejudice to Christianity to be
 imagined by men's searching into the
 Works of God, or the Nature of Moral
 Actions, or the digesting our own
 thoughts or conceptions of things,
 which is all that is understood by true
 Philosophy; but that the Model of Re-
 ligion which they were in so much
 danger of being deceived by, was made
 up, partly of Philosophical Precepts,
 and partly of Jewish Traditions and ri-
 tual Observations; by which the false
 Teachers endeavoured to corrupt and
 adulterate the Gospel of Christ. Ac-
 cordingly in the following Discourse,
 the Apostle first disputes against the ne-
 cessity of keeping the Ceremonies of
 the Law, now under the Gospel, and
 sums up the force of it, v. 17. *Which*
are *a* *shadow* *of* *things* *to* *come*, *but* *the*
body

V. 8.

body of Christ. And having thus dispatched the hardest Question about the Obligation of the Law of Moses, he enters upon the debate about other Inventions, which they endeavoured to commend to Christian.

(1.) About the *Worshipping of Angels*, as *Mediators* between God and Men; which was an Opinion then generally received among the corrupters of Christianity, the *Gnosticks* and *Judaizing Christians*; who were not so vain in their imaginations, to believe them to be *supreme and independent Deities*; for this they utterly denied; owning *one only supreme God the Father of all*: but they thought access to him was to be had by the *Mediation of Angels*, and therefore they brought in the *Worship of them*. *Baronius* indeed denies, that the *Gnosticks* introduced any *Worship of Angels*; but therein he is justly confuted by some late Writers of the Roman Church. For *Tertullian* condemns the *Gnosticks* for a *Magical Service of Angels*; and *Epiphanius* saith, that their *impure Sacrifices* were supposed to be offered up by *Principalities and Powers*, to the *supreme Father of all*. Which doth evidently prove, that the *Gnosticks* did give

A. D. 60.

n. 17.

Christian.

Lup. in Ter.

cul. de pra-

script. c. 33.

Nat. Alex.

Sac. 1. p.

52. Tertull.

de pra-

script. c. 33.

Epiph. bar.

21. p. 58.

give Worship to Angels as Mediators. And although Barons endeavours likewise to clear the Christians from this guilt (that the Church of Rome should be to blame for their sins) because Cornelius acknowledged the supreme Power above Angels, and because he had a bad Opinion of the Angel which gave the Law: Yet why might not they worship the Angels as Mediators between that supreme Power and them; and even that Angel which gave the Law as well as the rest, since they contended for the necessary observation of the Law? But besides, all the Judaeizing Christians were not followers of Cornelius, there being different Sects among them; as appears by Irenaeus, Epiphanius and others; and Barons himself grants that the Pharisees from the first and following Ages did worship Angels as the Host of Heaven. And the Essenes had their Angels of Prayer; and made their prayers to the rising Sun, whom they looked on as on the rest of the Stars, as animated and intelligent Beings. And why the Judaeizing Christians should not retain their former Superstitions, as well as their other Traditions and Observations, I do not understand.

stand. Especially, since Theodoret
 to expressly affirms, that these were
 pleaded for the keeping of the Law brought
 in the Worship of Angels, which custom,
 he saith, continued a long time in Phrygia
 and Cilicia; and at last the Council of
 Laodicea made a Canon against pray-
 ing to Angels. *But I should say and not*

*in the
 words
 of the
 text*

*Bell. de S.
 B. c. 20.*

Those of the Church of Rome are so
 sensible of the force of this Testimony of
 Theodoret against their practice, that
 they are driven to desperate shifts to
 avoid it. Bellarmine saith, that he speaks
 against the Ghosts; whereas Theodoret
 mentions only those who were for keeping
 the Law. Baronius saith in plain terms,
 Theodoret was mistaken, and that there
 were no such Hereticks then; but this
 is to prove that Bellarmine and others
 contradict him in it. Others therefore
 say, that the Worship of Angels here
 spoken against, is the Worshipping of them
 as makers of the World. But that is
 more than St Paul saith, for he speaks
 against that Worship which arises from
 Humility, and nothing so proper for
 that, as the Worshipping them as Media-
 tors between God and us. Some think
 it is when Angels are preferred before
 Christ, which is likewise more than the

Apostle

Apostle saith, and they who chuse o-
ther Mediators by whom God is more
accessible by us, do prefer them in
this, though not in Dignity. Others,
as the Jews did in their New Testament,
say, *When Angels are set up as Me-
diators in opposition to Christ*; but that
cannot sho the Apostles meaning; for
then his great business would have been
to have proved Christ to be the true
Mediator, and not Angels; and if any
Religious Worship of Angels had been a-
grestible with the Christian Doctrine,
the Apostle would never have thus in-
general condemned it, but with such
restrictions and limitations as made it
to be evil. Therefore to avoid these
difficulties, some conclude that by the
Worship of Angels is understood such a
Worship as was introduced by pretended
Revelation of Angels; but against this we
have the concurrent Testimony of St.
Chrysostome, St. Hierome, St. Ambrose,
Occumenius, Theophylact, who all agree
that it is to be understood of the Wor-
ship given to Angels. So impossible is it
for those who either give themselves,
or justify and allow the giving by o-
thers, any Religious Worship to Angels,
to escape falling under the Apostles cen-
sure, which likewise more than
aliqua

Jansen.
Preface
Ep. Aug.
Calif.

Chrys. in l.
Hier. Agaf.
9. 10.

sure, of being Seducers and corrupting
 the Gospel of Christ upon which
 be (22) About *Brother's Alliance* and
 greater *Fraternity of Life*. For these Seducers gave out that the *Christian's* *Commands* were yet very defective in this
 matter: And that there were several
 Societies of Men, both among the Jews
 and Heathens, which went very far be-
 yond them in the Efforts, the *Pythagoreans*, the *Stoicks*, and others, who far outstrip the Christians in
Watching and *Fasting*, in the hard
 usage of their Bodies, and a total ab-
 stinence from *Wine* and *Flesh*, and other
 lawfull Pleasures of Life. On which
 account these false Teachers represented
 the Christianity, as yet received in these
 Churches, as too soft and gentle an In-
 struction, and not answering the Cha-
 racter that was given of it; but if they
 had a mind to see it off with advan-
 tage, it would be necessary for them to
 take in some of the strictest Precepts of
 these Societies, especially relating to
Abstinence and *Marriage*. *Touch not*, *taste*
not, *handle not*: which they magnified
 as the greatest Lessons of true Religi-
 on, Self-denial, Humility, Mortifica-
 tion; without which they despised the
 Chri-

Christian Institution, is a mean and ordinary thing, requiring only the belief of some great things done and suffered by Jesus Christ in Judea; and the adhering thereto till Death; and doing those Offices of Humanity and Kindness to each other; and those Duties of Religion to God, which all Mankind thought fit and reasonable to be done.

But these pretended refiners of Christianity, were not contented with such common things; they sought for something singular, and extraordinary; so Epiphanius observes of the Gnosticks, *Epiph. Her. 23. p. 63.* in the beginning, *that they condemned Marriage, and abstained from Flesh; that under these pretences they might draw a sheet into their snare.* And likewise of the Ebionites, one of the Sects of Jewish Christians, *Her. 30. p. 139.* that they carefully abstained from all Flesh; and were every day Baptized, and celebrated the Eucharist only in Water, for fear of being defiled with the taste of Wine; wherein they were followed by the Encratites, Aquarii, and several others, who affected something out of the way, as a badge of more than ordinary Sanctity. And there are scarce any of those who are mentioned as the Authors of great Mis-

chief to the Church; but were remarkable for something of this Nature; and appears by *Martinus, Maximus, Ambrosius, Severus*, and others, and which is observable, this sort of singularity prevailed no where more, than in these parts of *Phrygia*, where the *Sacrifice* very much increased, and continued so to do in the days of *Epiphanius*. So very little effect had this wise and timely caution, given by the Apostle in this place, upon those who were willing to be deceived in that, for following Generations. *Cyprian* confesses himself to seek advice of Men, those were the Apostles disciples for against; but it seems most probable to me, that they were a sort of *Judaizing Christians*, who endeavoured to introduce the Customs of the *Jewish* (Essens) into the Christian Church. For when *St. Paul* speaks of the *Jewish Customs* he mentions no other, but such as were in esteem among them; he takes no notice of *Sacrifices* which were disesteemed among them; But let no man judge you in *Meat*, which among them was only *Bread and Salt*; or in *Drink*, which was only *Water*; or in respect of a *Holiday* or *New Moon*, or the *Sabbath Days*; which

Epiph. her.
47. p. 339.

Philo p.
876.

Epiph. p.
42.
V. 16.

which *Philo* relates, they were great *Phil. p. 877, 899.*
 And when he speaks of
 the *Chaldeans*, they would bring among
 the *Christians*, they were no other than
 such as were strictly observed among
 them; *and great distance, hard usage*
of their Bodies, and some Religious
not respect to Angels. Concerning
 which the Apostle delivers his Judgment
 to wit: *He grants that these things have*
an appearance to men, as is apt to raise an esteem of those
persons in whom it is. First, Because
 they seem to flow from a forwardness in
 Religion, *for I render* *Εὐλαβία*,
 which we call *Worship*; but that
 being a thing of an ill Name, doth not
 so well answer to the *idea* of *Wisdom*,
 for what *idea* of *Wisdom* is there in do-
 ing anything. This is therefore a rea-
 diness of Mind to do any thing in Reli-
 gion which men think pleasing to God,
 whether required by him or not. So
Hezekias expounds *Εὐλαβία* by
Εὐλαβία and *Εὐλαβία* by *ἰστορία*.
 And other Greek Words of a
 like composition, do imply no more
 than a voluntary inclination, as in *Εὐ-*
λαβία

Plato Sym. ἀρετὰς, which *Plato* useth for a service out of good Will, and free inclination. *Ἐδωκεν* is the same with *ἔδωκεν* and *ἐδωκεν* in *Xenophon*. And *St. Augustin* observes, that in his time, a Man that affected to be Rich, was called *Thebeldives*, and he that desired to be thought Wise, *Thebustious*, so according to this Analogy, a Man that would be thought very Religious, would then have been called *Theboreligious*, taking *Religious* in the sense of *Massarius Sabinus*, and not of *Nigidius Figulus*, i. e. in a good, and not in a bad sense. And so *Ἐδωκεν* is the desire of appearing more Religious than ordinary, which is not a thing evil in itself, but depends on circumstances. The next is *ἐν τῷ σώματι*, Humility, a Vertue so gracefull, so becoming Mankind, with a respect to God and to each other, that whatever makes a Show of that, doth so of Wisdom too. The third is *ἐν τῷ σώματι*, not sparing the Body, but using it with hardship to keep it under, *ἐν τῷ σώματι*. Which Words have such a hardness in their construction, as hath caused great variety of interpretations; which I shall not repeat. That which

Xen. Cyr.
Paed. 2.

Aug. ep. 59.

A. Gell. l.
4. c. 9.

no

seems

seems most natural, is, that *Honour* im-
plies a regard to the *Body*; and so it
only explains what was meant by *Spe-
cial*; the sense being, not with any regard
to the *Flesh* for its satisfaction; which
hath no farther appearance of *Wisdom*,
notably in the subjection of the *Body*
to the *Mind*; but as it seems to argue a
Mind not elevated above the *Body*, that
hath little or no regard to the necessi-
ties of it. Notwithstanding all this fair *Shew*
of *Wisdom*, the *Apostle* doth really con-
demn these things as not pleasing to *God*,
nor suitable to the *Christian Religion*.
For (1.) He saith they have only a *Shew*
of *Wisdom*. *Agon, phry, & depaluy, &c.*
saith *St. Chrysostom*, who
certainly understood the force of the
Words; the *Shew*, saith he, is the *Power*,
therefore not the *Truth of Wisdom*.
Imaginem rationis, humanaque sapientie,
saith *St. Jerom*. *Expositio in adhezz*,
saith *Theodoret*; so that notwithstand-
ing the fair *Shew* they make, they have
no real *Wisdom* in them.

(2.) This new way of *Worship*,
though it hath such a specious *Shew* of
Devotion and *Humility*; yet it reflects
on

on the Honour of *Christ*, is Mediator, and therefore the Apostle charges the introducers of it, with *not holding the Head*. If the *Cerinthians* did so upon the *Angel* above *Jesus Christ*, they were so much the more guilty; but if these *Judaizers* did only look on them as nearer and more agreeable Mediators to us, yet therein they brought a great disparagement upon him, whose Office it was to be the *sole Mediator between God and Men*. Mankind was very excusable in comparison, for finding out other Mediators, before God had declared to the World that he had appointed his *Son* to be our only *Advocate* and *Intercessor*; but for those who own his Mediatorship, to make choice of others besides him, is to call in question the Wisdom of the Father, or the Sufficiency, Interest or Kindness of the Son. For if God hath appointed him for this end, and he be able to go through his work, and willing to help all that address themselves to him; what need to call in other assistants? yea, what a Dishonour is it for him to stand by, and Applications be made to them to do that Office, which he was appointed alone to discharge?

(3.) These

These new inventions though never so plausible, are a disparagement to the Gospel, as not containing sufficient, or at least not the most sublime and perfect directions for *Humility* and *Mortification*. For our *Blessed Saviour* was so far from Being remarkable for these affected singularities, that the freedom and easiness of his conversation, was a great offence to those who understood little or nothing of Religion beyond these things. *The Son of Man* came eating and drinking, and they say, *Behold a Man Gluttonous, and a Wine-bibber, a friend of Publicans and Sinners*. Not that he gave way to any thing like *Luxury*, or *Intemperance*, who was the most exact pattern of all true and real Vertues; but because they saw nothing extraordinary as to the severity of his Life in these Matters, they looked on him but as one of the common sort of men, making no appearance of more than usual Sanctity, as to eating and drinking. And when *John's Disciples* who were bred up with greater austerities, were really offended that *Christ's Disciples* did not fast as they did: our Saviour puts them off with a Parabolical Answer; *Can the Children*

Mat. 11. 19.

Matt. 9. 12. *Men of the Bride-chamber fast, as long as the Bridegroom is with them?* which answer might puzzle them more, as not understanding why fasting should be inconsistent with his corporal Presence; yet to let them see that he did not look on *Fasting*, as a Duty unsuitable to his Religion, he tells them, the days would come, when his Disciples should have their times of Fasting. But the Days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast. So that it is not Occasional or Anniversary Days of Fasting, which are condemned here by the Apostle, as *Will-worship*, or neglecting the Body; but the imposing a new and severer course of Life upon Christians, as a way of greater perfection of *Mortification*, than what was required by Christ or his Apostles.

V. 20. This is that which the Apostle calls *being subject to ordinances*; and living after the Commandments and Doctrines of Men. Theodoret observes that he doth not mean the Law by this, but the unreasonable Doctrine of these seducers; and it is evident from the foregoing part of the 20th v. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the World, i. e. if ye are freed from the Yoke of the Law,

Now, what reason is there ye should submit to another, which depends only on the Authority and invention of Men? But what then? Doth St. Paul make it unlawfull to submit to any Orders or Rites appointed by the Church in which we live? By no means. For neither doth the Apostle speak of those who had lawfull Authority, but of Seducers; nor doth he speak of things appointed merely for Order and Decency; but of such things which are supposed by the imposers to have more of true Perfection and Sanctity in them; more Humility and Mortification; and consequently to be more pleasing to God, than bare obedience to the Precepts of Christ and his Apostles. Whoever introduce any such things into the Christian Church, and maintain any such opinions of them, are justly censured by the Apostle here, and fall under the condemnation of Seducers.

(4.) These things, whatsoever shew of Wisdom and Humility they make, are really the effects of Pride and Folly.

(1.) Of Pride: which appears,

1. By a great presumption of their great Skill and Knowledge in the Mysteries

series

V. 18.

series of Religion, and of what is most pleasing to God; *intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffing up by his fleshy mind.* So that here was a great outward appearance of *Humility* and *Mortification*; but within nothing but *Pride* and *Vanity*. It hath been long observed, that those who strive to exceed others in the outward shews and appearances of *Humility* and neglect of *the Body*, have been most liable to the Temptations of *Spiritual Pride*, i. e. to a high opinion of themselves, and a contempt of others: which they have manifested by an invincible stiffness in maintaining their own opinions; a readiness to impose them upon others; and impatience of contradiction from any.

2. By an affectation of greater *Humility*, than appears in others. These Seducers, we see, pretended to nothing more than *Humility*. Their *Worship of Angels* was from *Humility*; their neglect of *the Body* from *Humility* too: they made so much shew of it, as gave reason to suspect *Pride* lay at the bottom. For it is more real *Humility* to be contented to be thought *Proud* unjustly, than to labour for such an opinion of more than

than ordinary *Humility*, as these Seducers did.

2. Of *Folly*; in two things.

1. In placing the main of their Religion in things that would not bear the weight of it, which the Apostle intimates in those Words, *Which all are to perish with the using*, i. e. as the Greek *V. 22.*
Interpreters explain it, *the matters of* *Vid. Theod. Theophyl.*
eating and drinking are no such great things, that so much ado should be made about them. For as our Saviour saith, *Matt. 15.*
Not that which goeth into the Mouth defileth a Man; for it goeth into the Belly, *11, 17.*
and is cast out into the draught. And therefore saith the Apostle, *The King Rom. 14.*
Dom of God is not Meat and Drink, but *17, 18.*
Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost; for he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of Men.

2. In supposing the following their own *Inventions* to be more pleasing to God, than the observing his own Commands. For this seems to be at the bottom of all; these Seducers made no question, but they had found out ways much more pleasing to God, than those which were in common esteem and practice in the Christian Churches. So

that which is call here *εὐλαστικὴ*, is by the Latins render'd in *Superstitione*, i. e. in an opinion of pleasing God by some particular Rites of their own; in making much of their Religion to lie in forbearing some things and doing others, which God never required, and are made no parts of the Christian Religion by Christ or his Apostles. So that here are two parts of the *Superstition* here spoken of.

1. Forbearing some things as *unlawfull*, which God never made *unlawfull* by any prohibition, *Touch not, tast not, handle not.* The root of their *Superstition* did not lie, as some imagine, in *supposing the things which they did forbear as in themselves abominable, as some Hereticks did*; but in an opinion, that God would be so much pleased with the mere forbearance of them, that those who design to please God, were bound to abstain from them, although he had never forbidden them. And there is a material difference between these three things. (1.) Abstaining from things as in themselves *unlawfull* to be used. (2.) Preferring the Abstinence before the Use, on some particular Seasons and Occasions. (3.) Making the forbearance of them

them as unlawfull (though not forbidden) as necessary to the pleasing of God. There were such who did utterly forbid the use of *Marriage* and *Meats*, of whom the Apostle speaks, *1 Tim.* 4. 3. And the Christian Church, as *St. Augustin* observes, doth not fall under this censure of the Apostle, when in some cases it prefers Abstinence from both. *Ille prohibet, faith he, qui hoc malum esse dicit, non qui huic bono, aliud melius anteposit.* Aug. c. Faust. l. 30. c. 6. But yet there may be a *Superstitious Abstinence*, without that *Superstitious* opinion; or else the Christian Church had no reason to condemn the *Abstinence* of the *Montanists*, who, as *Tertullian* pleads for them, *utterly rejected that opinion.* Tert. de Jej. c. 15. Neither was it merely because *Montanus* wanted *Authority* to make *Laws of Abstinence*. But *Tertullian* acquaints us with other arguments against it, chiefly from the *unsuitableness of it to the design of Christianity*. And to impose such *Abstinence* as necessary to the pleasing God, is that which the Church condemned in *Montanus*; and the believing it is a *Superstitious opinion*; though of another sort from that which made the *Use* of them in it self unlawfull. For they did it up-

on an extravagant fancy, that no living Creatures were of God's making, but were produced by some other powers, in opposition to him; as appears by the Gnosticks, the Marcionists, the Manichees, and the Encratitæ. But the same reason could not hold as to those Judaizing Christians, who believed the World and all living Creatures were produced by the Power of God. For *Irenæus* saith, That the *Ebionites* did hold that God was the Maker of the World; and therein they differed from the *Cerinthians*, as well as in some other opinions, yet these *Ebionites* pretended to be Christians, and universally abstained from Flesh, as *Epiphanius* saith: not that they had any reason to account Flesh abominable; but they had learnt from the *Essens* to abstain from it, and thought it greater Sanctity so to do.

*Iren. l. 1.
c. 26.*

*Epiph. har.
30. p. 139.*

2. Their *Superstition* did lie in supposing that God would be mightily pleased with their doing some things of their own invention, as the *Worship* of *Angels* was; which was so far from being commanded by God in the *Law* of *Moses*, that they had thence many arguments against it: but notwithstanding they thought there was so much of *Humility*

military and Complement to God Almighty in it, that he could not but be very much pleased with it. And when men lay a great weight of Religion upon *doing* or *forbearing things*, neither commanded nor forbidden by the Law of God, that is so far from being a pleasing Worship of God, that it deserves no other name but that of *Superstition* and *Will-worship*; as they do imply a *shew of Wisdom*, without the *Truth and Power* of it.

But here arises the main difficulty;
 " How shall we put a difference be-
 " tween what is pleasing to God, and
 " what is not; or between true *Reli-*
 " *gion* and *Superstition*? For since the
 " Apostle implies that some things may
 " have a *shew of Wisdom* in them, *i. e.*
 " may seem pleasing to God, which are
 " not so; and other things may be more
 " pleasing to God, which do not make
 " such a *shew of Wisdom* to Men; it
 " seems to be a matter of as great difficul-
 " ty as concernment to us, to under-
 " stand the just and true bounds between
 " *Religious* and *Superstitious Worship*.

This is an enquiry of so great mo-
 ment and consequence, for the easing
 our minds of many troublesome doubts

and fears, and setting in them a true notion of *Religion*; that I shall from hence apply my self to the consideration of the true difference between the *reasonable Worship of God, and Superstition*.

Superstition in the general, is nothing else but an *unpleasing Worship of God*, I do not speak of that *Worship* which relates to a *false object*; which is more properly *Idolatry*; but when that *Worship* is ultimately referred to a *true Object*, as in the *Worship of Angels as Mediators*, then it is *Superstition* too; it being an undue way of giving *Worship* to the *true God*. I shall not trouble my self with an enquiry into the *Etymology* of the words in *Greek or Latin*, it being Well observed by *Aquinas*, that in this matter we are not so much to observe the *Etymology* of *Superstition*, as the use of the Word. And that hath been different according to mens notions concerning Religion.

*Aq. 2. 2.
q. 92.*

Those who believed no *God* at all, or at least no *Providence*, accounted all *Religion* to be nothing but *Superstition*. And it is a weak and silly Apology a late *Commentator* on *Lucretius* makes for his saying, so much mischief hath

*Tan. Fabr.
Not. p. 294.*

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hath been done by Religion ; by Religion,
saith he, he meant Superstition ; for he
accounted all Religion to be nothing else
but Superstition. And those in our Age,
who can find no other difference be-
tween them ; but that one is allowed, and
the other not ; or one is what we like, and
the other what we dislike ; do destroy
any real difference between them ; and
make only Religion a Superstition in fa-
shion ; and Superstition a Religion out of
fashion. Whereas if there be a God and
Providence, there must be such a thing
as true Religion : i. e. there ought to be
some Acts in us agreeable to the Con-
ceptions we have of the Divine Nature.
For, His Majesty and Power requires our
Fear ; not an amazing, confounding,
unaccountable Fear, arising from a per-
plexity and disorder of our imaginati-
ons ; but a just, reasonable, prudent
Fear, springing from our most serious
thoughts and deepest consideration of
things. For, if it be impossible for any
thinking man to satisfy himself in the
train of Causes, but he must come to this
thought at last, that there is some Cause,
whereof there is no former Cause, but is
Eternal ; which is that we call God ; then
it is impossible if this man pursues his

Leviath.
ch. 6. ch. 11.

own thoughts, but the first Consequence from hence will be, that if this God be the first cause of all things, his Power and Majesty is so great, as to command a due Reverence and Fear from us his Creatures. This is not such a Fear as Men have in a storm, or when a sudden calamity seizeth upon them, which makes them at their wits end, and so run they know not whither for present help; but it is a settled, calm, composed temper of mind; a Fear without consternation; an awe and Reverence of the Divine Majesty, without terrour and astonishment. For, as the mighty Power of God begets fear in us, so the infinite Goodness and Wisdom of God, doth only keep up Men's minds from sinking into slavish Fear, and horrible Despair; but fills them with comfortable hopes, and a patient and humble Trust and Confidence in his never-failing Providence. And this is the Nature of true Religion in the minds of Men.

But because it tends to the honour of our Maker, and the encouraging one another to Acts of Piety and Devotion, that this inward sense of our Minds be expressed by such external Actions as are agreeable thereto, from thence came the

the necessity of the publick Offices of Religion, wherein we offer up our Prayers and Praises to the Divine Majesty in acknowledgment of our Dependance upon him for what we have, or are, or hope for. And there is nothing in all this, but what is highly just and reasonable, and this is *true natural Religion*.

But then we cannot deny, that there is too great a natural proneness in Mankind to *Superstition*. For, when men cannot shake off the apprehension of a Deity, and yet are conscious to themselves that they have offended him; the very thoughts of him prove so uneasie to them, that they would be glad to believe there were none at all, and give all the advantage to Atheistical Objections which a willing mind can do: And as *Plutarch* observes of Superstitious Men, *they would be Atheists if they durst*. But finding still an inward dissatisfaction, and an impossibility of rooting out the fears of a Deity; the next thing is, to think upon some ways to please him, and to mitigate his displeasure against them. And we can hardly imagine any thing so pompous and ceremonious, so mean and servile, so cruel and barbarous, so ridiculous and superstitious,

pish, but Mankind have made use of it
 to atone the anger of their Gods. For,
 the first effect of *Superstition*, on Men's
 minds, was ; that they durst not make
 immediate *Applications* to the *Supreme*
Being, as being too great and powerfull
 for them: therefore they pitched on
 some inferiour Beings to mediate, and
 to offer up their Devotions and Sacrifi-
 ces to him, whom they thought it too
 great presumption to approach. When
 thus *Superstition* in the most proper
 sense of *Deiudicatio* had in a great mea-
 sure supplanted *true Religion* in the
 World ; then it proceeded to find out
 such ways and methods of Worship, as
 they thought would be most pleasing to
 these inferiour Deities. They erected
 Temples and Altars to them, and set
 out their Images with all the Art and
 Splendor they were capable of; and up-
 on extraordinary Occasions they were
 carried with wonderfull Pomp and So-
 lemnity through the Streets, all Orders
 of Men attending them with Supplica-
 tions and Prayers and costly Sacrifices
 to avert their Wrath and Displeasure.
 And they were not content with pro-
 miscuous Sacrifices, but they studied by
 all possible means to find out what Sa-
 crifices

sacrifices would please them best; if they fancied it must be something very dear and precious to them, they stuck not at offering up their very children to appease them; and contrived by loud Musick to stop their Ears from hearing the hideous cries of their Children while they were roasting in the flames. And in their ordinary Sacrifices, they were extremely scrupulous, lest any spot or blemish, or number, or unfit season, or so much as colour should be displeasing to the Gods they offered them too: some must have white and uneven; others black and even Sacrifices; some must have their Sacrifices offered at the rising, some at the setting of the Sun; some must have one sort of Beasts, and some another; and some no less than Man's flesh would satisfy; which inhumane Sacrifices on some occasions, did almost universally obtain, before the Christian Religion prevailed in the World. But again, other Deities were presumed to be so nice and squeamish, that nothing was to be offered them but Milk, and Wine, and Honey, and some Fruits of the Earth. It were infinite to relate the Rites and Customs of their Sacrifices, and all the ways they used

to

to please their Gods, and to find out whether they were pleased or not; by the posture, the tongue, the entrails of their Beasts; by the flying of Birds, the feeding of Chickens, the falling of a staff, the holes of a sieve, &c. and innumerable ways of Divination, by which they flatter'd themselves that they understood the good Will and Pleasure of their Gods, which did not so much satisfy their curiosity, as fill them with perpetual fears, and oppress them with the horrible Bondage of *Superstition*; which exalted almost every thing to the honour of a Deity, and made themselves miserable by seeking to please them.

But although this were the deplorable state of Mankind, forsaken of God and left to their own inventions; yet such is the weakness and folly of Men, that when God himself had given a *Law* to the *Israelites* to regulate their Worship, with as much condescension to their weakness, as the Wisdom of his Law would permit; yet so great was the Witchcraft of *Superstition*, that they were always almost hankering after the *Dotage* of their neighbour Nations. And although they often smarted severely
for

for it; yet the rod was no sooner off, but they were ready to return to their former *Superstitious vanities*, and were so obstinately bent upon them, that nothing could move them; not their former experience; not the unreasonableness of the thing; not the terrible denunciations of God's heavy judgments against them; till at last, when there was no remedy, the whole People were carried into Captivity; from whence the greatest part never returned, and their very memory is lost by a mixture with other Nations. Those who returned, have been so wise ever since, as to abhor that provoking sin of *Idolatry*; which their Ancestors suffered so much for: but by degrees they fell into other kinds of *Superstitions*. For it was thought a mean thing among them to keep to the Law; but the *Traditions* of their *Elders* were looked upon as precious things; and happy was the Man that was strictest in the observance of them. Their frequent Washings, their additional Fastings and Prayers, their Garments, their Postures, their very Looks had such an appearance of Sanctity above other Mens; that a man who kept only to the

the Law, was of no regard or esteem for Piety and Devotion.

This was the *State of Religion* among the Jews when Christ appeared, who laid open the foppery and hypocrisie of these great pretenders to extraordinary Sanctity. He directed men *to the love of God and their Neighbours*, as the main substantial parts of *true Religion*. And next to his making a propitiation for the sins of Mankind by the Sacrifice of himself, his great end was to restore *true Religion* to the World, which had been so long buried under the heap of *Superstitions*. And there needed so great an Authority as his was, to assure Mankind, that nothing was so pleasing and acceptable to God, as unaffected Piety, and universal Goodness; which comprehends under it all the Duties of Temperance, Righteousness and Charity. And it is one great Argument of the Providence of God watching over his Church, that he hath caused the Discourses of our *Blessed Saviour* to be preserved by the *Writings* of the *Evangelists*; without which in all likelihood, the Christian Religion had been long since lost in the World. For the *Jewish*
Chri-

Christians who corrupted Christianity, had represented *St. Peter* so favourable to them; and so misrepresented *St. Paul*; that unless Christ's Doctrine had been preserved in his own words, and that by the concurrent Testimony of different Writers, the Christian Religion had preserved little more than its name in the World.

And yet with all this advantage, such was still the fondness of Mankind for their own *Inventions*, that even under the Apostles eyes, most of the Churches began to be tainted with these corruptions; partly by the *Judaizing Christians*; and partly by the followers of *Simon and Menander*. But they all agreed in something new and mysterious, and more pleasing to God, than the dull and common way of *Faith and Obedience*. After the *Apostles* decease, the corruptions still multiplied, and any new pretence to *Revelations and Mysteries*, especially being joined with greater *Abstinence and Severity of Life*, took wonderfully among weak and injudicious Christians, and made them apt to despise the *Churches Devotions*, as too cold and flat, and not having that *Life and Spirit*, that Strictness and Austerity which appeared among the new
preten-

pretenders. What disturbance on this account did the Spirit of *Montanus* give to the Churches of *Phrygia*, *Galatia*, and *Cappadocia*? The meer pretence to *Revelation* had never done it, had it not been for the stricter Laws of *Fasting* and *Mortification*, and greater Severity of Discipline than was used in the Catholic Church. It was this which made *Tertullian* swallow the bait he had despised before; and the force of all his Arguments against the Church is, we are stricter than you. But notwithstanding all these pretences, the Christian Church still kept it self within its bounds, making nothing necessary to Salvation, but what Christ and his Apostles had made so; yet recommending the Practice of *Fasting*, as there were just Occasions, especially before the great solemnity of *Easter*; wherein both the Sacraments were administred with more than ordinary Devotion, and the Penitents reconciled to the Communion of the Church.

If we look at this day into the State of the Christian World; how great a part of it is relapsed into almost Heathen Superstitions, in the Worship of Images, and Saints, and Angels as Mediators?

and no great difference in the outward Solemnities and Processions, save that their *Sacrifices* are turned into a *Consecrated Water*, which is carried in *Procession*, as the *Heathen Gods* were wont to be. It is true, there are great pretences to *Wall-worship*, and *Humility*, and *neglecting the Body* in several *Orders of Men*; and those are looked on as ways of *greater perfection*, than living in the World, and doing good in it. Which we have no reason to think agreeable to the *Doctrine of Christ* or our *Apostle* here. But where there is not only *Sanctity* and *Merit*, placed in such observations, but *Supererogation* too, they flatly contradict *St. Paul*; for if that be true, these things have far more than the *shew of Wisdom*; for what wiser thing can any man do, than not only to provide for his own *Salvation*, but for others too?

In the *Eastern Churches*, the best part, I fear, of their remaining *Christianity*, lies in the strict observing the *Fasts* and *Festivals* of the *Church*. They mightily despise the *Fasting* practised in the *Roman Church*, as not deserving the name of *Fasting*, because they end it at noon, and allow *Wine* and *Fish* for their *repasts*.

Mich. Non. East. Græc.
Efig. p. 260. Hef. Rom.
de jejun. Chrys. hom. 6.
ad Pop. Antioch.

pass. Although it is said
that of late the Greeks break
the strict Fast at noon; but in
St. Chrys. and St. Basil's time
they accounted it no Fast

wherein they did not totally abstain till

* V. Job.

Ludolph.

Hist. Eschiv.

pic. l. 3. c.

6 n. 81.

Thom. à

Jesu de

Convers. omnium Gen. l. 7. c. 18. Cateris. Itiner. Hierosolymit. &

Syriac. p. 209. Franc. Quarosm. Elucid. Terra Sancta l. 3. c. 55.

54, 55, 56, 57, 58. Eufraz. Zialowski de Eccl. Orient. Græc. p.

39. Metroph. Critopul. c. 18. Hanc scis, inquit Methodius Græc.

(apud Mich. Non. in Eccl. Græc. effig. Dial. 13.) unde factum est

ut vos Latini à reliquis Christianorum Nationibus, sic in Jejunio

raceretis, ut nulla vobis ne Mercuriana quidem, qua tota vestra est,

consentias. Jejunatis sabbato, feria 4. Non abstinetis ab usu Cornu-

um; pisces, & quibusdam in dies, lacteum, quadragesimali tem-

pore comeditis, servatis meridia jejunium, &c.

In the Church of England, which ap-
proacheth nearest of any in the World to
the Primitive Church, the Duty of Fa-
sting is recommended upon its true
Grounds, not as though there were any
peculiar Sanctity or Merit in it, which
are Superstitious Conceits, but to keep
the Body in Subjection to the Spirit.
It lays no snares upon the Consciences of
Men; it gives no Countenance to hy-
pocritical pretences to Fasting; but it

lets

sets before us the example and practice of the *Primitive Church*, and according to the Temper and Moderation then used, leaves persons to judge of their own strength, occasions, times, manner and degrees of *Fasting*; excepting the *Fast on Good-friday* or the true *Antepaschal Fast* (which some kept longer than others) which *Tertullian* saith, was universally observed by the *Christian Church*, as a necessary *Fast*, and had been so from the *Apostles times*; but as to other times a greater liberty was allowed,

*(stinendi
Lexus ac liber modus ab
(severus
Ponitur cunctis; neque nos
(que cogit
Terror impellit; sua quem-
Velle Potestas.*

*Prudent. l. Cath. hym.
post-jesu. P. Tert. de je-
jun. c. 2. r3. Hier. ep.
14. ad Marcel. Aug. c.
Fausl. Manich. l. 30. c. 5.
ad Casul. Ep. 86. Epiph.
in exposit. fidei Cath. n. 23.
Socr. l. 3. c. 22. Vitar.
Antioch. in Marc. 2. Cas-
sian. Coll. 23. c. 30.*

Yet even *this Church*, that is so wise, so moderate, cannot escape the charge of *Will-worship and Superstition*, for the *Orders* that are observed in it. But wherein is it that we are liable to this charge? Do we make the *Orders* of the *Church* any parts of our *Religion*? Or

think that God is any otherwise displeased with others violation of them, than as it argues a froward, restless, unpeaceable Spirit? But what is it then? God, say they, hath not commanded these things, therefore they are *Will-worship* and *Superstition*.

This is an *Objection*, which for the honour of our Church I must remove, before I proceed to what remains. The true Case among us is this, the Church appoints such *Orders* to be observed in it, which have no expresse command in *Scripture*; some utterly refuse them as *unlawfull*, though no where forbidden in *Scripture*; the Question is, Whether of these two sorts, those who practise according to these *Orders*, or those who utterly refuse, are liable to the charge of *Will-worship* and *Superstition*?

To clear this, we must state the notion of *Will-worship* and *Superstition* as they are here used by the Apostle, and then apply it to the present Case.

(1.) *Will-worship* I have shew'd, is nothing but a forwardness to do something that relates to the pleasing of God; and is said by the Apostle to have a *shew of Wisdom*, and therefore can be no more evil in it self, than *Humility*, or
negle-

neglecting the Body; but whether it be good or evil is to be determined by circumstances.

(2.) Those circumstances which make it ill are, when men make those things a part of their Religion, which God hath neither commanded nor forbidden; and think God is pleased with their meer doing or abstaining from doing them, and this is true *Superstition*. For there are two things necessary to the *Notion* of it.

1. That the matter about which it is conversant relate to the *pleasing* of God. *Superstition* I grant, hath been taken by *Plutarch* and others from him, for a *dreadfull apprehension of the Deity*; but that is rather the *foundation* of *Superstition*, than the *definition* of it. For a *Superstitious* Man doth both think God to be angry without just cause, and beyond reason; and to be pleased again without reason. If he thought God inexorable upon his Displeasure, he must presently despair; but because he thinks he may be easily pleased again, therefore he bethinks himself in what way he may best do it; and so devises several ways of his own, and useth any means suggested by others, though ne-

ver so unreasonable in themselves, in hopes to please God by them. Thence *Plutarch* mentions such Men, *καὶ τὰς τρεῖς τρόπους, uncouth ways of Worship*; and he observes, that at the same time, *καὶ ἀλλήλους, ἀλλήλους, they flatter and reproach God*; they think unworthily of him, as of one that is *καὶ ὀργιστός, very easily provoked*; and yet that he is *καὶ ὀργιστός, as easily changed*; and that is the reason why a Superstitious fear puts men upon finding out any ways and methods to please him, though never so unreasonable; for they looking upon God as a peevish, angry, humourfome Being, they have no certain Rule to judge what will please him, and therefore follow their own fancy and imagination about it.

That they be mistaken in their judgment concerning what they believe to be pleasing to God, that is, that they judge that to be so, which really is not. So *Superstition* is an excess or overdoing in the matter of *Worship*; that which doth *excedere legittimum cultum superstitare* & *excedere*, saith *Plinius*; which *Erasmus* he thinks much better than any other. *Cicero* saith, that Religion is *pius cultus*, *Superstition* *improbus*

Decorum;

Diff. Elym.
Cic. l. i. de
N. D.

Deorum, i. e. one is a reasonable, the
other an unreasonable Worship. So *St. Augustine*
saith, it is *inepta & importuna Reli-*
gio; a foolish and troublesome Religi-
on. *Festus* applies it to those things *Reli-*
which are done, *præter morem Civita-*
tis; against the Custom prescribed by
Law. As those of the Church of Rome
do, to things done against the commands
of the Church: and so not fasting upon
Saturdays, and fasting upon Sundays are
both *Superstitious* in their account; but
all the Trappings of the Mass, and Foll-
lies of their Worship are by no means
Superstitious, because required by the
Church. Which however helps us with
a good argument to prove that the
Worship of Images, and Saints, and An-
gels are required by their Church; or
else by their own confession they must
be *Superstitious*. But their Divines do
all agree with *Aquinas*, that men may be
guilty of *Superstition* in the Worship of the
true God; i. e. when men make choice of
something unfit or unreasonable to express
their Worship of God. And *Saarez* quotes
Cajetan, as allowing this Text to be ex-
tended to all *Superstitious Worship* not
founded in right reason. And *Cajetan*
upon the place saith, that although they

Rel. v. Re-
ligios.

Ag. 2. 2. q.
92. Art. 2.
q. 98 Art. 3.

Saarez de
Rel. tr. 3.
l. 2. c. 1.

have a shew of Wisdom; yet not in any
honour, saith he, 1. e. they deserve no
esteem, being only for the satisfying of the
flesh: It is of a carnal desire as to these
external observations.

(3.) The Superstition here condemn-
ed, lay in the supposing God to be
pleased with the forbearance of lawfull
things; touch not, taste not, handle not.
Which if we understand either of *Mourning*
or *Marriage*, was a forbearance of things
in themselves lawfull; but they suppo-
sed God would be far better pleased with
their forbearance of them. I do not say,
it is Superstition for any man to abstain
from doing what he apprehends to be
unlawfull by vertue of a general com-
mand. For that is a Moral Duty,
and obedience to those places of Scrip-
ture which bid us abstain from all kind
and appearance of evil. But yet it is
plain here was a Negative Superstition
in the forbearance of lawfull things.
And so it was in the dispute between
Christ and the Pharisees about healing on
the Sabbath day; they thought it un-
lawfull. Christ declares it to be lawfull
to do good on the Sabbath days. Here
was no positive observance on the Pha-
risees part; Yet here was Superstition in
them;

Matt. 12.

19. 12.

them; and therefore the true notion of Superstition doth extend to the forbearance of things in themselves lawfull as displeasing to God.

But how shall we know, when such a forbearance is Superstitious?

By these Rules:

If such a forbearance be thought to bring some special beuour to God.

For then, even Dr. Ames himself grants it to be Superstition, to abstain from lawfull things, though accounted unlawfull by the Persons who abstain; when some singular service and honour is by that abstinence intended: For then he grants it to be a kind of Ceremonious Worship.

The question then is, when this case happens, for our Abstinence from Popish or Mahometan Superstitions, is not any special Act of Service, or Honour to God?

But if we lived where those Acts of Worship were required by lawfull Authority, and we refused to comply with them, that would be a special Act of Honour and Worship to God; in being a declaration of our Minds, that we thought God dishonoured by such Acts, and therefore durst not comply with them.

It was once a great Question among the Rapists, whether they might lawfully

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come to our Churches, or not; and if
 not to our Prayers and Sacraments, yet
 to our Sermons, to avoid the severe Pe-
 nalties of the Laws. And after great
 debate both by a Committee of the Coun-
 cil of Trent, and afterwards at Rome;
 it was resolved in the Negative, upon
 this Reason, because in our Circumstan-
 ces, it was *semper distinctum cultus*, a
 mark of distinction as to Religious Wor-
 ship, and therefore it was an Act of special
 honour and service to God to forbear.
 To abstain from pouring out Wine, and
 throwing Incense in the fire, is in it
 self no Act of Worship; but when the
 Heathen Emperours commanded the
 Christians to do it, in token of com-
 pliance with their Religion, their ab-
 staining then from it, was a singular
 Act of Worship to God. So in the
 present Case, when men are required by
 lawfull Authority, to do things which
 in themselves are lawfull, to testify
 their union and conjunction with us
 in Religion; their refusal in this Case is
 a special Act of Worship; and being
 without Ground, is nothing else but *Su-
 perstition*. When men value and esteem them-
 selves as more holy and more in the fa-
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want of God on the account of such
 forbearance. As the *Pharisees* did on
 the account of their *Traditions*, who
 believed that God had no such people
 upon Earth as they were; and despised
 others who were far nearer to the King-
 dom of God than themselves, as mere
Publicans and *Sinners*. And it is very
 natural to Mankind to set a great value
 upon themselves, for the sake of their
 affected singularities in Religion; and
 in a transport of pride and vanity, to
 tell God himself, as the Pharisee did,
That they are not like other Men. But
 this is a certain sign, whatsoever they
 pretend, that they look on the forbear-
 ance of the things which others do, as
 a part of *Holiness*; and if they do so,
 it is undoubtedly *Superstition*. For, on
 this ground we charge the *Papists* with
Superstition in their *Ceremonies*, because
 they place holiness in them. It is true,
 they say they are the Instruments to
 convey some degree of holiness to
 them; but this makes no material dif-
 ference; for those who account them-
 selves more in God's esteem for the
 sake of such things, do attribute some
 real efficacy to such distinctive Char-
 acters.

sters of themselves, as to the obtaining the favour of God.

3. When they forbear necessary Duties of Religion rather than comply with others in lawfull things, as Communion with the Church they live in, in Prayers and Sacraments: which cannot be denied to be necessary Duties; but if men resolve rather to forbear these, than to join in such Ceremonies and Prayers as do accompany the performance of them, it is a sign they prefer the following their own imaginations before the joining in Communion with the Church in the most unquestionable Duties of Religion. As, in the Case of the *Eucharistia* of old, who thought it unlawfull to taste of Wine; and therefore refused to communicate in the Eucharist, unless they might have it in Water alone. Was not this a great *Superstition* in them, rather to forbear communicating with the Church, than not to observe their own fancies in what they thought most pleasing to God, as to the manner of doing it?

Now to apply this to our own Case. We

We are often blamed for laying too great weight on the *Ceremonies* of this *Church*. But certainly, never any *Church* laid less weight upon its own Orders, supposing that it believes them to be just and reasonable. It places no *holiness*, no *merit*, no *efficacy* in them, as to the obtaining the Grace and Favour of God: It expects obedience only for *Order* and *Peace-sake*; It hath taken great care by *Presaces* and *Canons* and *Rubricks*, to prevent any misinterpretation of its intention and design.

But on the other side, those who dissent from us, lay so great weight on their scruples, that they will rather hazard breaking a *Church* in pieces, ruining our Religion by our differences, losing all the benefit of Communion with a *Church*, whose Doctrine they approve in all the Duties of religious Worship; than they will yield to the allowance of those circumstances of our Communion which our *Church* requires. And now on which side the charge of *Superstition* more justly lies, let all that are impartial judge.

So much I thought necessary on this *Occasion* to speak, in vindication of our *Church* from this common imputation of

Super-

Superstition, by those who so little understand what it means.

Nothing now remains, but to make *Application* of all to our selves. You see how much mischief *the shew of Wisdom* was like to do in the *Apostolical Churches*; let us all have a care of being deceived by it. It was long since

Τὸ πρῶτον λογὶ καὶ ἀλη-
θείας ἔχει
Ἐπίσης μὲν οὖν, καὶ πρῶ-
τον λόγον ἔχει.
Men.

observed by *Menander*, That *things which were like Truth* were more easily believed by the generality of *Mankind*, than *Truth it self*. So I am afraid

it is about Religion, which is the *Wisdom* here spoken of, that which makes a great *shew* of it to the World, is more apt to prevail among persons of weak and well disposed Minds than true *Wisdom*. For *the shew of Wisdom* strikes more upon the fancy and inclination of such Persons, than sober, calm and well-weighed Religion; which seems dull and flat to those who have more warmth and zeal than judgment and discretion. And I do not at all question, but many of the corruptions of the Christian Church came in, from an apprehended necessity of complying with the heat of some over-zealous People; who were not contented with the plain and excel-
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lent Religion of Jesus Christ; but they must, as they thought, heighten and improve it, till they had mixed with it the freaks of *Enthusiasm*, or the dotages of *Superstition*.

In the *Church of Rome* there is in many things a shew of *Wisdom*, in *Will-worship* and *Humility*, and neglecting the *Body*; And in some of our Sects, that seem to abhor *Will-worship* so much, that for fear of it they will not give civil respect to men; yet they pretend to shew of *Wisdom* in *Humility* and neglecting the *Body*, but after a different manner: others have a shew of *Wisdom* too in a wonderfull, I had almost said, *superstitious* zeal, against what they call *Will-worship* and *Superstition*. But what is to be done in this Case? How shall we avoid being led aside by such a shew of *Wisdom*, on every side? I shall only lay down some Directions, and so conclude.

(1.) Fix a true Notion of God and the Christian Religion in your minds. If you judge aright of the Divine Nature, it will ease your minds of many uneasie thoughts, troublesome fears and superstitious fancies. He is not capable of being flattered or deceived by us;

God

God is neither taken with outward appearances, nor is he pleased with any thing we do, merely because it is displeasing to our selves, *The righteous God loveth righteousness*; and he is pleased best with the innocency, integrity and holiness of our hearts and lives. And for the Christian Religion, take not your Notion of it from the different and uncertain opinions of Men, but from the Doctrines of Christ and his Apostles. Men do not read the Scriptures as they ought to do, with a design to know their Religion by them; but to justify what they take to be Religion from them. One would think it were impossible for any one that considered the sayings of Christ or his Apostles, to place his Religion in being for or against any particular Modes or Ceremonies of Worship; whereby he may so easily see that it lies chiefly in an excellent temper of mind, holy, spiritual, humble, calm, peaceable, charitable, and a sublimeness of action to this temper. This is so plain and easie to be understood, that he must read the New Testament with a very ill mind, that doth not find it out. And if you have settled this Notion of true Religion, it will be a
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is to keep men within the just Bounds of Vertue; but when men found a stronger inclination to one extreme than to another, they made use of remedies proper to reduce themselves from that extreme, by great severities towards themselves, by Watchings, and extraordinary Fastings, and other hardships: but when Fools saw Wise men do these things, they imagined presently that there was an excellency in the things themselves, and that if they did the same things, they should pass for very good men, and be highly in the favour of God. Which, saith he, is just like an ignorant Fellow, who observing the Physicians prescribing Physick to his Patients, with forbidding eating to them, and finding them to recover upon it, should presently conclude, that surely it is the best way to live upon Scammony and Aloe, and such like, and so keep himself with the same strictness that was prescribed to the Sick; which instead of preventing a Disease, would certainly bring one on, saith he, do those who use the remedies of diseased minds in a state of health, they spoil a good constitution of their souls, and make it uneasy and troublesome.

(3.) Judge

(1.) Judge of mens pretences, not by their outward shew and appearance, but by their Spirit and Temper that goes along with them. This was the course the Apostle here took; he regarded not their shew of Wisdom and great appearance of Humility and Mortification; but he pursued these things to their Fountain-head; and there he found nothing but spiritual pride, and vanity of mind. We must not judge easily nor rashly concerning this; but where the evidence is notorious, we have great reason to slight and contemn the most sanctimonious appearance, viz. if there be great uncharitableness and censoriousness towards all who do not comply with them; great scorn and contempt of all other ways but their own; great malice and spight against all who go about to oppose them; where these are, whether in the Church of Rome, or elsewhere, whatever the shew of wisdom be, this wisdom descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. But the Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easie to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisie.

Ver. 18.

Jam. 3. 15.

Ver. 17.

SERMON IX.

Preached before the

KING.

February 15, 1683³₄.

Job XXIII, 15.

When I consider, I am afraid of him.

THese Words were spoken by Job; not in his flourishing and prosperous state, when that extraordinary Character was given of him, *That there was none like him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feared*

Job 1. 8.

2. 3.

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feared God, and eschewed evil; but, after the Devil was permitted to try that malicious Experiment upon him, viz. whether the changing his outward condition, would not alter the inward disposition of his mind, as to God and Religion. For he suggested, that nothing but Interest made him so religious, that all his Piety and Devotion was owing to the wonderfull Blessings of God upon him; and if these were once removed, he would be so much impatient, as to curse God to his face; i. e. to speak evil of his Providence, and renounce his service. And this temptation prevailed so far on Job's Wife, that she became an Instrument to carry on the Devil's design, when she said to him, *Dost thou still retain thy integrity? Curse God and die:* As though she had said, "You see what all your Religion is now come to, and what a condition the Providence of God, on which you trusted so much, hath brought you to; let them serve God, that have ease and plenty, you have nothing left to do now, but in spite of Providence, to put an end to such a miserable life." But as it was observed of the old Heathen Oracles, that they had

often a true meaning in them; but it was commonly misapplied (the Devil's own knowledge of future events being but probable and conjectural) so that it was a shrewd guess that so sudden a change would have such an effect upon some person concerned in it. But he was very much mistaken as to Job, who behaved himself with admirable patience and submission to the Will of God, under all his severe afflictions; in so much, that he did not utter an innocent expression to come from him, with respect to God and his Providence.

Job 1. 22. *all this Job feared not, nor charged God foolishly.*

Which was no doubt a great disappointment to the Devil, who made account he should by Job's impatience have given a terrible blow to Religion, by making the World believe, that it was nothing but a grave pretence of some men, seeming to be better than their Neighbours. For if a man of so much Piety, as Job was esteemed, should no sooner be pinched himself with affliction, but he would be quarrelling at God's management of things, the Devil would have inferred, that he did plainly discover, how little influence Religion

had upon the minds of those, who made the greatest show of it.

This had been a very dangerous part in that Age, to the rest of Mankind, among whom the example of so great a Person, as Job was in the parts of Arabia where he lived (as appears

by the *Sabeans* and *Chaldeans* his un-
Job 1. 15,
distant Neighbours) did give a mighty
17.
reputation to the practice of Religion, especially among such a wild and ungoverned People as the *Arabs* were. And

in truth, the World is never so kind to Religion, to give a fair interpretation of the failings of those who pretend to it; but how unreasonable soever it be, they will make Religion bear the blame of all their miscarriages who wear its livery. And Job himself tells us, there

were such profane Persons then in the
21. 14, 15.
World, who despised and contemned all Religion, as a vain impertinent, insignificant thing. *Therefore they say unto*

God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve him? And what profit shall we have if we pray unto him? &c. they understood or valued nothing but what made for their present interest; and they were content to

let God alone with the disposal of another World, so they might secure this to themselves. But it was not only then a reasonable vindication of Religion, that *Job* behaved himself with so much patience under his great Calamities; but it continues so to be as long as the memory of his sufferings remains, which hath lasted for so many Ages, that some think the Book of *Job* the oldest Book in the World; (not in the supposed translation into Hebrew, but in the Original Arabic or Syriac) and is now like to be preserved, as long as the Christian Church endures; against which the Gates of Hell will never be able to prevail.

But notwithstanding the general evenness of *Job's* temper, and his quiet submission to Divine Providence, there were two things which touched him more sensibly than all the other circumstances of his afflictions; and those were,

(1.) That God should seem so much displeased with him, as to single him out as a mark to shoot at, when he was not conscious to himself of any such impiety to deserve it, according to the common method of his Providence.

(2.) That

(1.) That his Friends should call in question his sincerity in Religion, and suspect him guilty of Hypocrisy and secret Impiety; because they concluded that such great calamities could hardly fall upon any man, that was not guilty of some such great crime towards God.

These were a trial of Job's patience indeed; that those from whom he expected the greatest comfort, should prove his worst Enemies? for if God were angry, who could stand before him? and if he were false in his Religion, how could he expect he should be his Friend? But in answer to both these, he owns his fear of God's displeasure, and denies the charge as to his secret Hypocrisy, and both in these few words of the Text, *When I consider, I am afraid of him*.

These words may be understood,

I. With respect to his apprehension of God's displeasure against him. *When I am troubled in his presence, such he immediately before; not as though Job were like those *Elphaz* speaks of in the foregoing Chapter, which said unto God, Depart from me, or that he*

endeavoured, as profane Persons do, to keep God out of his thoughts as much as he could: for what could Job have done under all his Troubles but for God's presence to support him? And therefore he declares his firm resolution never to let go his confidence in God whatever became of him; *Though*

Job 13. 15. *he slay me, yet will I trust in him.* *His*

16. *also shall be my salvation; for an hypocrite shall not come before him.* But the Presence which troubled Job was the great appearance of God's displeasure, of which again he speaks, *Ps. 2. 4. For*

God maketh my heart flesh, and the Almighty troubleth me. As though he had

said, "All other considerations make no deep impression upon my mind;

"but I am no more able to bear up

"under the sense of God's anger, than

"the Wax is to forbear melting before

"the Fire." And from this sense of his

own utter inability to stand before the

Power of the Almighty, he elsewhere

Job 13. 25. argues thus with him: *Will thou break a*

leaf driven to and fro? And wilt thou pursue

the dry stubble? Man being as unable to

resist the Divine Power, as a leaf is to

stand before a tempestuous Wind, or

the dry Scrubbe to stop the rage of a

consuming Fire.

But

But here are two things to be relat-
ed to make this matter clear before I
proceed. First, and is not, secondly an

(1.) What it was made Job to afraid
of God when he considered, seeing he in-
folds so much upon his own Integrity.

(2.) What apprehensions then ought
we to have of God in our minds, when
such a one as Job said, *When I consider,
I am afraid of him.*

(1.) What it was made Job to appre-
hensive of God's anger that he was afraid
of him, when he pleads so much for his
own Integrity towards God and Man.
Doth not this seem to teach the com-
fort and satisfaction of a good Consci-
ence, when such a one as Job was afraid
of God? For from whence comes all
the peace of a good Conscience, but
from him? And what comfort can there
be from him, when the very thoughts of
whom make us afraid? To which an-
swer, *Job said, I am afraid of him.*

(2.) Mankind ought always to re-
serve an humble and awfull apprehen-
sion of God in their mind. And that
from the sense of the infinite distance
between God and us; as he is our Fa-
ther, and we are his Creatures; as he is
our Benefactor, and we his Dependents;

according to

as he is our supreme Lord, and we his Subjects; as he infinitely exceeds us in all the Perfections of his Nature. For, what are our shallow and dark and confused conceptions of things, to his Divine Wisdom? By which he comprehends all the differences of times at one view: and all the Reasons and Conjunctions and Possibilities of things are open and naked before him. What is all the power of Mankind, if it were gathered into one, in comparison with that Divine Power, which gave a Being to the World, when it was not; and rules and governs, and orders all things in it, with greater ease than we can move a Finger? It is by that, God hath spread out
 Job 37. 18. the Skies, and balanced the Clouds, and
 16. garnished the Fleavens, and divided the
 26. 12, 7. Sea, and banded the Earth upon nothing; as it is elegantly set forth in this Book of Job. And therefore as Job saith to his
 13. 11. Friends, Shall not his excellency make you afraid, and his dread fall upon you? For as Elihu speaks, With God is terrible Majesty: and therefore when we consider, we have reason to be afraid of him.
 37. 23. (1.) The best of Mankind have guilt enough upon them to make them apprehend

held God's displeasure under great af-
 flictions. Job's Friends insist much up-
 on this, that God may see just cause to
 lay great punishments upon Men, al-
 though they may not see it in them-
 selves. For, if he charges his Angels with
 folly, as Elisha speaks; and the Heavens
 are not clean in his sight; How much more
 abominable and filthy is man, which drink-
 eth iniquity like water? i.e. whose na-
 tural propensity to evil, is like that of
 the thirsty Traveller to drink of the
 Brook that he meets in his way. But
 suppose some to have much greater
 care to restrain their desires than others;
 yet saith he, *What is man, that he should*
be clean? and he which is born of a wo-
man, that he should be righteous? i.e. to
 such a degree as not to deserve afflicti-
 ons from God. And after all the pro-
 testations Job makes of his Integrity,
 he confesses, that there is so much na-
 tural and contracted impurity in Man-
 kind, that God may justly cast them
 into the Furnace to purge and refine
 them. *Who can bring a clean thing out of*
an unclean? not one. And, *I have fin-*
ned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou
preserver of men? For, *thou writest bit-*
ter things against me, and makest me pos-
sess

4. 18.

19. 15.

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Job 14. 4.

7. 20.

13. 26.

felt the iniquities of my youth. He could
 not deny but he had sinned enough to
 deserve Gods displeasure: but accord-
 ing to the usual method of Providence,
 he could not but think his Case very
 hard, to suffer so much for sins com-
 mitted before he well knew the nature
 or danger of his sins; for sins so long
 since repented of, and forsaken (which
 is the only satisfactory sign of true re-
 pentance) and when formerly wicked
 men in the height of their impiety,
 and contempt of God and Religion, go
 away here unpunished: whereas he had
 made it his business and delight to serve
 him, as he speaks in this Chapter, *My*
 23. 11. *feet have held his steps, his way have I*
 12. *kept and not declined; neither have I gone*
back from the commandment of his lips: I
have esteemed the words of his mouth, more
than my necessary food. But after all this,
 to find Gods hand so heavy upon him,
 made him sometimes complain in the
 7. 11. 10. *anguish and bitterness of his Soul; Why hast*
thou set me as a mark against thee, so that
I am a burden to myself? And else-
 Job 16. 12. *where, I was at ease, he hath broken me*
asunder; he hath also taken me by my
reins, and shaken me to pieces, and set me
up for his mark. Nothing sunk his spirit,
 noisill till

till he thought God was displeased with
 him; and then his heart and courage
 failed him; and he begg'd compassion
 from his hard hearted friends, *Have pi-
 ty upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my* 19. 21.
friends: for the hand of God hath touched
me. Which makes good the observati-
 on of the Wise Man, *That the spirit of a* Prov. 18.
man will sustain his infirmities; i. e. a 14-
 Man's natural courage will carry him
 through a great many troubles, but a
 wounded spirit who can heal? i. e. when
 a Man's heart fails him, he becomes a
 burden to himself; every thing adds to
 his trouble, and nothing can give him
 ease but what can revive his Spirit.
 Now, no consideration in the World
 doth so break in pieces and confound
 and shatter the Spirit of a Man, like the
 apprehension of God's wrath and displea-
 sure against him for his sins; which made
 Job cry out, like one wounded in the
 most tender and incurable parts, *The*
arrows of the Almighty are within me, 6. 4.
the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit;
the terrors of God do set themselves in ar-
ray against me.

But after all this,

(1.) God may not be so displeased
 with such Persons as lie under great af-
 flictions,

12. Q1

11. Q1

afflictions, as they apprehend them to be. And this was the truth in Job's Case. his sufferings were extraordinary, and such an unusual concurrence of calamities and accidents, made him think he had great cause to apprehend an injured hand of God to be stretched out against him. But the main design of this Book is to shew that all these afflictions were intended only as trials of his Patience, and that God never loved him better than at this time, when he thought him so much displeased with him; as is shewed in the Conclusion. This is a very hard thing for Persons under great afflictions to believe, and it is not necessary they should; nay, sometimes the apprehension of God's displeasure against them for their sins, is one of the most usefull parts of afflictions: for without this, they are apt either to inflame Men's minds with discontent and unruly Passions; or to stupify them with the dull and heavy Opinions of Chance or Necessity: but when afflictions are looked on as coming from God's hand, this rouses and awakens our minds, and makes us think it necessary to look about us, to search and examine our ways, to find out the particular

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sins we have displeased son ab anger hend nance Peace cause pen to turn Reme that more thereb stare Potio vanit done. all th of Li to se They rits i the f high a wi of th see a and t

sins we have given way to, which may have justly provoked God to shew his displeasure against us. As we have reason above all things, to be afraid of his anger; so it is our Wisdom to apprehend the least change of his Countenance towards us, and to make our Peace with him, and then we have no cause to fear any thing that may happen to us: For the Wise God will then turn all our Crosses into such proper Remedies for the Diseases of our Minds, that the sharpest afflictions will tend more to the purging away our sins, and thereby to a more sound and healthfull state of our Souls, than all the sleeping Potions of the intoxicating pleasures and vanities of this World would ever have done. For, Luxury and Epicurism, with all the Arts of heightning the Pleasures of Life, are things not more delightfull to sense than dangerous to men's Souls. They are like too frequent use of Spirits in a time of health, which weaken the force of Nature by raising it too high. So that were it in the choice of a wise Man to have and enjoy as much of this World as he pleased, he would see a necessity to restrain his appetite, and to deny himself some of the lawfull Plea-

Pleasures of Life; were it only to keep up the relish by variety, and by enjoying them less, to hope to enjoy them longer. We have certainly then no reason to complain, if God thinks fit to debar us at all times, any use of unlawfull Pleasures, and an inordinate use of any; since he leaves scope enough for the true contentment of Life; and if at some times he judges it necessary to give us Physick as well as Food, shall we not submit to his Will? For as *Job* 2. 10. *saith, Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?* as if he had said, "Shall we think much that our Father should be our Physician; that he who hath been hitherto so kind to us to please us, should now be so kind to undertake our Cure? Shall we complain that our Physician doth not humour our Fancies, when he designs our health? God knows what is better for us, than we do for our selves; and that which seems most evil at present, may turn to the greatest good." I confess afterwards, *Job* being either sowed by the malignity of his Distemper, or heated by the impertinency or bitterness of his Friends Discourses (for

if they had no relation to his Case, they were impertinent; if they had, they were severe and uncharitable.) doth break out sometimes into some expressions of impatience, but these arose from the Clouds upon his mind, which made him then apprehend all these afflictions to come from God's wrath and indignation against him; the thoughts of which he was not able to bear: but therein he was wholly mistaken, and then only hit upon the truth of his Case when he said, *When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold, i. e.* more pure and refined, more bright and glorious.

23. 18.

(4.) In the hardest condition good Men can be cast into, they have more comfortable hopes towards God than other Men can have. *Jab* was extremely afflicted to think the best Friend he had in the World, and whom he desired to please above all things, should become his Enemy, and set himself against him; but he did not always think so, although his Friends represented his condition to him in the blackest and most frightfull manner, which startled him and made him resent his sufferings with great bitterness, and express it with a kind of horror; yet he soon recovered

red himself out of those Agonies, and kept up his trust and confidence in God. And there were two things which supported him under all his dismal apprehensions.

- (1.) The reflections of a good Conscience in the discharge of his duty to God and Man; and therefore he tells his Friends, after all their sharp reflections upon him, *Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me; my righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.* It was this which raised his Spirits, and made him stand his ground against the opposition of his Friends, and the scorn of his Enemies: It was this, which made him despise the meanness of those who courted, admired, and flatter'd him in his former Greatness; but now despised and derided him, making him the subject of their raillery and entertainments: *And now I am their song, yea I am their by-word;* even theirs who but a little before, as he at large describes it, kept their distance from him, and made way for him as he passed the streets, and admired all spoke as Oracles, and all he did as the perfection of Wisdom and Vertue. But so wise a Man could
- Job 27. 5, 6.
- Job 30. 9.
29. 7, 8, 9, 10.

could not be surpris'd to see flattery turned into scorn and derision; (for no Man thinks to gain by his flattery, who hath not a secret contempt of the person he flatters) and so good a Man could not but forgive the unjust reproaches that were cast upon him, as long as he had the inward satisfaction of his own Integrity. And therefore he gives so ample an account of his whole Life and Actions, both in his publick and private capacities; not to boast of his Virtues, but to be a just vindication of his Innocence under all their aspersions; and to let them see, that the comfort of a good Conscience doth not fail, when Friends do; and as the Wise Man speaks: *When the tack sliders in heart shall be filled with their own ways; a good man shall be satisfied from himself.* Ch. 30. & 31. Prov. 14. 14.

(2.) The expectation of a future recompence; either in this World, as he seemed to hope, or at least in another. Some think, that Job spake as to this Life, when he said, *For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the Earth; And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God: and so the meaning of these Words is, tho'* Job 19. 25. 26.

at present his Case seem'd desperate, and his Life past hope, *the worms eating through his skin*; yet he had a secret hope, that God would at last redeem him out of his troubles, and that very loathsome Carcass of his would hold out so long as to see that Day. But the Christian Church hath generally understood them to referr to the Day of *Resurrection*, when he was certain that God would reward his innocency and sincerity: And of a future state, it is plain he had an undoubted expectation, when

27. 8. he saith, *What is the hope of the Hypocrite, although he hath gained, when God taketh away his Soul?* which shews the great folly of Hypocrisie, which can never stand a man in stead beyond this World, where he must leave all his Riches, and Honours, and Hopes, and Happiness behind him; and the just expectation good Men had, that God would reward them after this Life, though they were sufferers in this. And therefore, although *Job* had such dreadful apprehensions of God at present, yet he had very comfortable hopes as to his future condition, when he calls God his Redeemer, even the same of whom he here saith, *When I consider, I am afraid of him.* (2.) But

(2.) But if so good, so vertuous, so sincere a Man as *Job*, had such terrible apprehensions of God, what can we wretched Sinners think of him? if when he considered, he was afraid of him; have not we reason when we consider, to sink into despair? Can we appeal to God as to the sincerity of our hearts in his fear and service, as *Job* did? Can we say with *Job*, that we have not gone back from the commandment of his lips, but have esteemed the words of his mouth more than our necessary food? Have we not rather cast his most just and reasonable commandments behind our backs, and esteemed our vanities, our superfluities, our debaucheries, our follies, above the words of his mouth? But if we have not despised his Laws, yet we cannot say, as *Job* did, that our feet have held his steps, his way have we kept and not declined; for our Consciences cannot but condemn us for the breach of his Laws; and our sins, our great and manifold sins, bear witness against us. What apprehensions of God then may we entertain in our minds, when even *Job* was afraid of him? I answer,

(1.) None ought to look upon God as so terrible, as to make them despair.

R k 4

(2.) Men

(2.) Men ought to have different apprehensions of God, according to the nature and continuance of their sins.

(1.) None ought to look upon God as so terrible, as to make them despair. For when our apprehensions of God are such as drive us from him, they overthrow the great end of Religion, which is to bring God and Man nearer together. None ought to exclude themselves from mercy, whom God hath not excluded from it; and God excludes none whom he invites to repent, with a promise of forgiveness, if they do it; and the goodness and long-suffering, and forbearance of Sinners, is on purpose design'd to lead them to Repentance. So that after all this, to despair, is not only to reject the mercy which God offers, but to question his Truth and sincerity, to slight his Patience, to disparage his Goodness, and to look upon him as a most revengefull and implacable Being; which is, to entertain most dishonourable and unworthy thoughts of the best, the wisest, the most mercifull and compassionate Being in the World; who hath proclaimed himself

Exod. 34. to be a God mercifull and gracious, long-
6, 7. suffering, and abundant in goodness and
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truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, i. e. to all that truly repent of them. So that when we consider, we have no reason to be so afraid of him as to despair.

(2.) Men ought to have different apprehensions of God, according to the nature and continuance of their sins. For as on the one side, the Scripture assures us, that *God knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust*; and therefore will make all just and reasonable allowances for the unavoidable infirmities of Humane Nature, and all circumstances that abate the wilfulness of our evil Actions: so on the other side, at the same time when he declared his infinite goodness, he adds, *and that will by no means clear the guilty*; not of any kind of sin; for then none could escape, since all have sinned, and therefore are become guilty before him: but the guilty are such, as add impenitency and obstinacy to their sins; such as wilfully and presumptuously, not only break; but contemn his Laws; not barely neglect their duty, but despise it; such as are not meerly cold and indifferent about Religion, but are zealously

Psal. 103.

14.

H. Grut. in
loc.

lously concerned against it, and endeavour to expose it to scorn and contempt. For a very judicious Interpreter saith, This severity of God here spoken of, *in visiting the iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children*, &c. is not to be understood of all crimes, but of such as immediately concern the honour of the Divine Majesty, such as Apostasy, Idolatry, and consequently Atheism and Irreligion; which is a Plot against Heaven, an attempt to derhorne the Divine Majesty, or to make his Government insignificant in the World. If faults are justly aggravated among Men, not so much from other circumstances, as from the dignity of the Person against whom they are committed, and from the tendency of them: Will not the parity of reason so far hold, as to aggravate those sins which are immediate offences against the *Divine Majesty*, and which tend to overthrow his Government of the World?

II. And so I come to the second sense of these Words, as they may be taken for *Job's Vindication of himself from the unjust charge of his Friends*, as though he were a *secret Hypocrite*, or
a con-

a contemner of God and Religion, under a fair outward shew of Piety and Devotion. For, *Eliphaz* in plain terms, in the foregoing Chapter, tells him, he was one of those who thought God was at too great a distance to take notice of things upon Earth. *And thou sayest, how* Job 22. 13,
can God know? Can he judge through the 14.
dark Cloud? Thick Clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not, and he walketh in the circuit of Heaven. Which is in short, to charge him with denying the Providence of God; and reckon him with those that said unto God, De- Job 22. 17.
part from us: and what can the Almighty do for them? i.e. with such as would have nothing to do with God or Religion, looking on it as a foppish useless thing: but however, he gives him good counsel to repent of his folly, and to apply himself yet to God; *Acquaint now* 21.
thy self with him, and be at peace, thereby good shall come to thee. 22.
Receive I pray thee the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart: i.e. be persuaded to be Religious in good earnest, and to let the fear of God make a deep impression upon your Soul, and you will find great benefit and advantage by it. *If thou return to the Almighty, thou* 23.
shalt

shalt be built up, &c. Job finding his Friends so often letting fall expressions to this purpose, and knowing no imaginable reason for it, but a groundless suspicion they had entertained, because of his unusual sufferings, makes here in this Chapter a solemn protestation of the mighty value and esteem he had for the Laws of God, that he constantly observed them, and esteemed them more than his necessary food. And to let them know that this was no sudden heat, he tells *Eliphaz*, that the fear of God in him, came from the most weighty and serious consideration; *When I consider, I am afraid of him*: as if he had said, "I have spent many thoughts about God
 " and Religion, whether there be any
 " just reason for Mankind to apprehend
 " and stand in awe of an infinite Being
 " above them; and I do assure you,
 " the more I have fixed my thoughts
 " upon this matter, and laid all things
 " before me, the deeper impression the
 " fear of God hath made upon me: or
 " as some render it, *perpendo & paveo*,
 " *I consider, and I fear him.*

Wherein are two things implied

I. That

I. That Men's disesteem of Religion doth arise from want of *Consideration*.

II. That the more Men *consider*, the more settled and fixed will their minds be in the esteem and practice of Religion.

I. That Men's disesteem of Religion doth arise from the want of *Consideration*.

Which will best appear, by examining the most common and prevailing reasons of Men's disesteem of it; which are chiefly these two;

(1.) Their looking on Religion as a matter of meer *interest and design*, without any other foundation.

(2.) The unaccountable folly and superstitious fears of Mankind; which makes them think more to be in it than really is.

(1.) Looking on the whole business of Religion as a *matter of interest and design*; first started by some great *Politicians* to tame and govern Mankind, and ever since kept up by a Company of *Priests* who lived upon the Cheat, and therefore were bound to maintain, and

and to keep it up : which otherwise would sink to nothing.

This is the worst that can be said against Religion ; and it is bad enough of all reason, if it were true : and we should deserve all the scorn and contempt, which such Men treat us with, if we were but accessory to so great a fraud and imposture.

But is there such a thing as Reason among Mankind ? Can we judge of what is true and false ; probable or improbable ; certain or uncertain ? Or must some things be run down, without examining ; and others taken up, without any other colour of reason, than because they serve to such a purpose ?

For God's sake, and for our own sakes then, let us *consider* these things a little better, before we pronounce against them ; or entertain any doubt or suspicion of them in our minds. And there is this great reason for it, that the wisest, the best, the most considering, the most disinterested Men have taken the part of Religion, and been zealous Defenders of it ; whereas on the other side, the younger, the looser, the more debauched part of Mankind, have been most inclined to Atheism and Irreligion.

But

But if we have not Reason of our side, we are content to give up the Cause, and so be thought Deceivers (which does very hardly down with an ingenious mind:) and if on the other side, there be nothing sound but false and groundless suppositions, or unreasonable suspicions; I hope, Religion may be fairly acquitted from being thought a mere contrivance of Politicians, and we from being the Silver-smiths to this Diamond. (1.) Those who make Religion to be such a contrivance, must suppose that all Mankind were once without any such thing as Religion. For, if some crafty Politicians did first start the notion of an Invisible Being among the rude and unthinking Multitude, the better to awe them into Obedience to Government; then Mankind must have lived before those Politicians appear'd, with as little sense of God and Religion, and with as much security and ease, as to the thoughts of another World, as the very Beasts that perish. If this were true, these Politicians were so far from consulting the interest of Mankind, that they were the greatest Enemies to it; by filling their minds with such unquerable

querable fears, as rob them of that undisturbed Tranquillity which they enjoyed before. But when and where did this race of mankind live, whom these designing Men first cheated into the belief of a Deity, and the practice of Religion? The eldest Writings in the World, without all dispute, are those of the Holy Scriptures; and among these, the Book of *Job* hath been thought the most antient; for in all this Book we have not one word of the Law of *Moses*, or of Circumcision; which makes it very probable to have been written before the Children of *Israel's* coming out of *Egypt*; (and some *Arabic* Writers think that *Job* lived before *Abraham*; and others, at least in the time of *Jacob*) However it be, this Book of *Job* gives an account of the sense of mankind about Religion very early; and by it we find that the great, and wise, and understanding men of the World, such as *Job* and his three Friends were, (who as far as appears by the story, were all of them independent Princes; such as were common then, and a long time after, in those parts about *Arabia*) had a mighty sense of God and Providence, and the Duties of Religion upon their

*Greg. Abul-
farai. hist.
Dynast. p.
13.
Hier. Trad.
Hebr. in
Gen. 22.*

their minds. And they not only give an ample Testimony as to their own times, but they appeal to all the Traditions of former times; *Enquire I pray* Job 8. 8. *thee, of the former Age, saith one of Job's Friends, and prepare thy self to the search of their Fathers. For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing.* But what is it he appeals to Antiquity for, and the observations of all former Ages? It was for this, *viz.* the bad condition of all that were not sincere in Religion: *So are the paths of all that forget God, and* Job 8. 13. *the hypocrites hope shall perish.* And another of his Friends speaking of the remarkable judgments of God upon the World, saith to Job, *Hast thou marked* 22. 15, 16, *the old way which wicked men have trodden; which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overthrown with a flood? i.e. the Men of the old World.* And what was their great and provoking sin? A contempt of God and Religion, *Which said unto God, Depart from* 17. *us; and what can the Almighty do for them?* This is the oldest, and truest, and severest instance of such a profane and irreligious temper, and the great mischief it brought upon the World; which shews, that this is not the original dis-

position of Mankind, but the monstrous degeneracy of it. But if they are unsatisfied with the Testimony of *Joh's* Friends, let them produce any to be mentioned the same Day with it, which can pretend to give a truer account of the Religion of the first Ages of the World: I do not mention *Moses* (although his Authority be unquestionable) lest he should be thought one of these *Politicians*, who inspired the People of *Israel* with the Principles of Religion; but I the rather chuse this instance of the free Princes of those parts of the East, who were under subjection to no common Authority, yet were so early possessed themselves with such firm Principles of Religion, and assure us that all good Men had the same; and that they were slighted by none, but such loose and profane wretches, whom God set up for the Monuments of his Indignation.

(2.) Suppose we should allow that in a particular Nation, some great and wise Man should think fit to reclaim a loose and barbarous People by the Principles of Religion; how doth this prove Religion to be false, or what doth it signify to the universal consent of Mankind?

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kind? Is it any Argument that there is no foundation in Nature for Justice, Charity, and common Humanity, because wise Men have been put to use variety of methods to reduce Canibals to civility? And it would be as good arguing against all Morality from thence, as against Religion, because it was judged by wise Men a necessary instrument to civilize Mankind. And as far as I can observe, Religion and Civility have risen and sunk together. The Roman Orator made a bold Challenge, as to the then known World, to name any Nation *so barbarous, that they had no Religion among them.* And although the Romans knew but little of the habitable World in comparison of what is now known; yet upon the whole matter, the new discoveries add force and strength to the Argument; only with annexing this observation, That the more improved and civilized any People have been, the more regard they have had to Religion; the more ignorant, sottish, and barbarous they were, although they were not wholly without Religion, yet it was in less esteem and honour among them: and this observation will hold, as to all the

Nations since discovered both in the East and West-Indies. But what a mighty number of *Politicians* must spring out of the Earth at once, to scatter the *seeds of Religion*, in such a manner, over all the face of the Earth? It is impossible that a few Men, though never so subtle, never so experienced, should be able to captivate all Mankind in so great a variety of Language, and distance of Countries. And such an universal Effect must have some common and universal Cause; which the invention of a few crafty Men could never be.

(3.) But suppose this to have happened in some one unlucky Age, when the Earth brought forth such a fruitfull crop of *Politicians*; yet how comes it to pass, since these have so long been laid in their Graves, the effect of this Policy should still remain all the World over? For, every Age is apt to condemn the Policy of the foregoing; and whether the men of the present Age stand upon the shoulders of the precedent or not, they are very apt to think they see farther than they; how comes it then in so many Ages, as have passed since these deep *Politicians* lived, that no other Persons have been able to lay open

open the artifice of Religion so, as to free mankind from the pretended slavery of it? It cannot be said, *that there were none to attempt it*; for that were to own an absolute consent of all mankind as to Religion. And we know there were some once at *Athens*, who set up with a design to overthrow Religion; but with so very little success, whatever the Roman Poet boasts, that they were said to be very private in their meetings; and the City was so little moved with their Discourses, that *S. Paul* saith, *the* Act. 17. 22.
Men of Athens, were in all things too superstitious. It cannot be said, *that there were none ready to join in such a design*; for all bad men had rather there were no Religion at all; and their number is never small, and never unwilling to carry it on: How comes it then after all, that Religion still prevailed, and the fears of a Deity could not be shaken off, no not by the greatest *Politicians* themselves, who thought they understood all the Arts of Government, as well as any that had been before them? Would not some of the Roman Emperours, who had none to controul them, have been glad to have eased themselves of the fears of an invisible Power? But

they found, after all their strugglings, it was a thing not to be done; God and Conscience were so much too hard for their loose reasonings set up against them, that where men had shaken off the love of Religion, they could not shake off the fears that follow the contempt of it. But where mankind have been imposed upon, when once the cheat is discovered, all its force is for ever lost: for men do not love to be deceived, especially in matters that so very nearly concern them; so that if Religion had been a trick of so long standing, assuredly it would have been hooted out of the World long ago; and nothing would have been so ridiculous as to pretend to it. But thanks be to God, the credit of Religion is not yet worn out of the World; which can be owing to nothing but to those invincible Reasons, on which it stands. For there hath wanted nothing of wit or malice in profane Persons, to undermine and blow up the reputation of it. But the foundations on which it is built, are so firm and stable, and have endured the violent shocks, and secret attempts of so many Ages, that as long as reason and civility hold up in the World,

World, we need not question but Religion will. If once I begin to see Mankind cast off all the reins of Civil Government, and run wild and savage, quitting all the conveniences and pleasures of Houses, and Lands, and Cloths, to live naked in the Woods, and to feed on Roots and Acorns, because they suspect that all Civil Government, was a crafty design of some cunning Men to get above others; I may then begin to think that such suspicions about Religion, may prevail upon Mankind to cast off the most reasonable obligations to maintain the profession and the practice of it. For although the Reasons on which Religion is grounded, be independent on Civil Authority, such as the train of Causes, the Motion, Order, Beauty, usefulness of all the parts of the Universe; which remain the same in all Ages, and under all Revolutions: yet the Principles of Religion do really give so much strength and support to Civil Government, that none who have a kindness to the one, can be Enemies to the other; and they who suspect Religion to be an Imposture, will be as ready to suspect all Government to be no better: the consequence whereof

will be nothing but Barbarism and Con-
 fusion. ^{as to know what is true} But it may be said, that al-
 though the Principles of Religion in
 general, are reasonable enough in them-
 selves; and the things we observe in
 the World, do naturally lead men to
 own a Deity; yet when they reflect on
 the strange folly and *superstitious* fear of
 mankind, they are apt still to suspect,
 that men being puzzled and confound-
 ed, have frighted themselves into the
 belief of Invisible Powers, and perform-
 ing Acts of Worship and Devotion to
 them, as appears by so many ima-
 ginary Deities among the Heathen; and
 the superstitions which still prevail on
 so great a part of the World. But this
 way of reasoning is just as if a man
 should argue that there is no such thing
 as true Reason in mankind, because ima-
 gination is a wild, extravagant, unrea-
 sonable thing; or that we never see any
 thing when we are awake, because in
 our Dreams we *fantie* we see things
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nothing but pure and undefiled Religion should obtain in the World? or at least that the Christian World were purged from the follies of Enthusiasm and Superstition. But alas! the more we consider all the wilfull errors, and involuntary mistakes, vicious Inclinations, violent Passions, foolish Opinions, strange Prejudices, superficial Reasonings, and obstinate Resolutions which are incident to Mankind, we shall see greater reason to wonder, that there is so much true Religion in the world, than that there is no more. Nothing but the strong impression God hath made of himself on the Souls of Men; nothing but a Divine Hand could have kept such a flame alive, in the midst of so many contrary Winds of Mens different Passions and Interests, and such a rough and tempestuous Sea, as the state of this World hath generally been with respect to true Religion. But if through the mercy of God it fares better among us, as to outward circumstances (for which we ought to be very thankful) let not Religion bear the blame of all the follies and indiscretions of those who profess it. It is a hard Case, if the common weaknesses of Humane Nature, and those

those faults which Men commit through the want of Religion, shall be laid to the charge of it. But nothing is more apt to incline Men of better understandings, to ill thoughts of Religion, than to see it made use of, to serve bad purposes and designs, to cover ambitious projects, and to draw in People the more easily into Faction and Rebellion; and while they look on this side of the Picture, and see there nothing but the lamentable spectacles of the mischief which have been done in the World under the pretence of Religion, they are far from thinking those *Politicians*, that invented it; it being so easily turned upon the Government, and being then so dangerous to it. (Which is a farther Argument to me, that it could not be a contrivance of such Men: for then there would have been no other Scheme of Religion owned in the World, but that of the *Leviathan*, which being so great a Novelty, it is a certain sign, that Religion was not framed merely to serve the ends of Government.) But however, that only true and holy Religion which we profess, is so far from giving any encouragement to seditious Practices, that it is not possible to contrive

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give a Religion, which we must adhere to whatever we suffer for it, that should more effectually recommend the Duties of Quietness, Patience, and Submission to Authority, than the genuine Religion of our Saviour doth. As long therefore as the Rules of our Religion are so plain and easie, so reasonable, so useful, and beneficial to Mankind, we ought not to lessen our esteem of it, for the sake of any weak, or superstitious, or hypocritical pretenders to it.

II. Having thus far shewed, that Mens distesteem of Religion comes from the want of *Consideration*, I now come to the last thing I designed, as the *Application* of the rest, viz. That the more Men do consider, the more they will esteem Religion, and apply themselves to the practice of it.

And now methinks; I may with greater assurance address my self to all sorts of Persons, since all that I shall request, will lie in two very reasonable things.

1. To *consider* impartially what is fit for them to do in Religion.

(2.) To

2. To practise so much of Religion, as upon *Consideration* will appear fitting to be done.

(1.) To consider impartially what is fit for them to do in Religion. I am not going about to persuade you to leave your Estates and Employments, and to retire your selves from the World and to give up your selves wholly to Devotion. For I do not deny but that they who serve their Prince and their Country, and follow their lawful Employments, with an honest and conscientious diligence, and neglect no necessary Duties of Religion, do carry on the great ends of Religion, as well as those, whose time and occasions will give them leave to devote themselves more to Fasting and Prayer. But let none think the matters of Religion to belong to others, and that they have business of another nature to attend upon, as though paying their duty to God, were fit only for those who had nothing else to do. While *Job* was in the height of his Prosperity, and was *the greatest of all the men of the East*, he tells his Friends how much he was employed in doing all the good he could by works of Justice and Charity; *He was*
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Job 1. 3.

29. 12, &c.

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eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and
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 he knew not, he searched out; yet he
 esteemed the words of God's mouth, or the
 means whereby his Duty was made
 known to him, more than his necessary
 food; he had his set times of offering
 sacrifice and prayer to God; and upon ex-
 traordinary occasions, he required his
 Children to prepare themselves for the
 solemn Sacrifice by Fasting and Prayer;
 which is meant by sanctifying them. So
 that not only constant Offices of Reli-
 gion, but more solemn Acts of Devotion
 at certain seasons, are not only agreea-
 ble to the ancient practice of the Chri-
 stian Church, but to the most ancient
 Principles of natural Religion, as they
 were understood and practised in the
 time of Job; who was so great a Person
 in God's esteem, that himself, who knew
 him best, gave that Character of him,
That there was none like him upon earth;
 and therefore we cannot follow a bet-
 ter Example.

(2.) Let us then set our selves to
 practise all the known Duties of our
 Religion, and the more we consider
 these things, we shall be more resolved
 to do it.

(1.) That

31. 13. &c.

23. 12.

1. 5.
16. 17.

1. 5.

(1.) That God infinitely deserves from us all the service we can do him.

(2.) That we cannot serve our selves better, than by faithfully serving him.

(1.) That God infinitely deserves from us all the service we can do him.

Job 22. 2. *Can a man, saith Eliphaz, be profitable*

to God, as he that is wise may be profitable to himself? i. e. he cannot: but

yet if God expects and requires such service from us, we have no reason to

enquire farther; for we are certain all we can do, falls infinitely short of the

obligations he hath laid upon us. For let us consider, Was it not God who formed

us in our Mothers Womb, and so curiously framed and fashioned all the parts

of our Bodies? Was it not He, that breached into us the breath of Life, that first set the

Ecc. 12. 6. *Cistern in the Heart to receive and dis-*

perse it, and the Pitcher at the fountain, to take it at its return from the Veins?

Was it not He, that fixed the golden Bowl in the Head that covers the Brain, and stretched out the silver Cord of the

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admirable use and service of all the Parts? Was it not He, that endued us with those noble Faculties of Understanding, Reasoning, Reflecting, Remembering, Discoursing with others, and Governing our selves? Was it not He, that made all the Parts of the World about us so serviceable and beneficial to us? Was it not He, that preserved us from so many and great Dangers which we have been exposed to by open Violence, and secret Conspiracies; by Fire, and Sword, and Plague; by storms at Sea, and upon Land too? Was it not He, that hath so often scatter'd the Clouds, that threatned us, when the face of the Heavens gathered blackness, and all things seemed to tend to confusion? Is it not He, who still wonderfully continues our Peace and Plenty, amidst all the sad complaints, and miserable condition of our Neighbours? yea, who continues our Laws, our Government, our Religion amidst all the Fears and Conspiracies which have been among us? And shall we think much to serve so Wise, so Mercifull, so Gracious a God? Is it not He, that hath exercised so much patience, and long suffering, and goodness towards

towards us in order to our Repentance? That still offers to us the most unvaluable Blessings of the pardon of our Sins, and everlasting Happiness upon our sincere Repentance? Yea, is it not He, that hath given his own Son to die for our Sins, and exposed him to the Reproach and Pain of an accursed Death upon the Cross, that he might be a Sacrifice of Atonement for us? And will not all these Motives prevail with us to fear and serve him, who hath deserved so much more from us, than the service of our whole Lives, in the most perfect Obedience, would make a requital for? Shall we then grudge him that proportion of sincere Obedience, which he is not only willing to accept of, but hath promised to reward with a Crown of everlasting Glory? Which is the last thing to be considered.

(2.) That in serving God faithfully we do most effectually serve our selves
Phil. 4. 18. and promote our own Interest. *Men will praise thee, saith the Psalmist, when thou doest well to thy self.* Not, when thou pampereest thy Body, and thereby layest a foundation for Lusts and Diseases; not, when thou heapest up Riches, and knowest not who shall gather them; not,

not, when thou givest way to all the Vanities and Follies of a deceitful World: but when thou takest a just care of thy true and lasting Interest. For as *Job* saith, God looked on this as the proper Wisdom of Mankind: *Unto Man he said, Job 28.28. The fear of the Lord is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.* And that is certainly our true Wisdom, whereby we secure our best Friend in all conditions, we disappoint our greatest Enemies, we lay the surest foundation for Peace and Tranquillity in our Minds while we live, and a Blessed Eternity when we die. To which God of his Infinite Mercy bring us.

M m S E R-

SERMON X.

Preached at a Publick

ORDINATION

AT

St. Peter's Cornhill,

March 15. 1683.

1 Tim. V. 22.

Lay hands suddenly on no man.

THese words are Part of the Charge given by St. Paul to Timothy, whom he had intrusted with the Care of the Churches of the *Proconsular Asia*, when he departed from thence into *Macedonia*. For, although St. Paul saith, *he besought Timothy to abide still at Ephesus*; yet we are not

1 Tim. 1. 3. to suppose, that his Care extended no farther, than to the Church in that City; seeing, by means of St. Paul's Preaching

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ing there, St. Luke affirms, That all AR. 19. 10.
they which dwell in Asia heard the word

of the Lord Jesus, both
Jews and Greeks: Which

can neither be understood of
the greater, or lesser Asia;

but of that Asia, which lay
about Ephesus, and wherof

it was the (a) chief Metro-
politan City, the (b) Roman

Proconsul keeping his ordina-
ry Residence there, and hold-

ing those Solemn Courts, to
which the Inhabitants of that

Province were obliged to
resort. But withall, this was

the (c) Principal City in the
Common Assembly of Asia, (d) a

Place of great Trading, the
Seat of the most Magnificent

Temple of Diana, (e) where
the Citizens of Asia met to

Worship; on all which Ac-
counts, there was a great

Concourse of People thither
from the parts thereabouts.

It is no wonder therefore
St. Paul should fix his abode

so long in this City (f), for
M m 2

(a) *Ἐφεσὺς ἡ πρώτη
τῆς Ἀσίας Μετροπόλις.*
Chrysost. in Ep. ad Ephes.

Certum est celeberrimam illam civitatem primas semper tenuisse inter annis hujus Diocesis Metropoles. Better. Diatrib. 1. c. 2.

ΕΦΕΣΙΟΝ ΠΡΩΤΟΝ ΑΣΙΑΚΟΝ, in Nummis Galieni, Saloninae, Gordiani apud Holsten. not. in Steph. Byzant. p. 123.

Ἐφεσὺς seu Prima vulgo Graecis dicta qua Romanis Metropoles seu Gentis Capita. Ezek. Spanhem. de Numism. dissert. 9. p. 885.

(b) Prima Civitas sed quo Proconsulis. Holsten.

Ephesum viri, altiorum tamen Asiae remotiores convenient. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 29.

(c) Euseb. Hist. Eccles. l. 4. c. 13.

(d) Strab. l. 14. Asiatic. Orat. de Concord. ad Graec. Athos.

(e) H. Vales. not. in Euseb. l. 4. c. 13.

(f) Act. 20. 31.

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about the space of three years in all. And yet a long time for him, considering the quickness of his Progress in other places, (g) some allowing no longer time to his first Peregrination, (h) others not so much) where in he and Barnabas planted Churches in (i) Seleucia, Cyprus, Pisidia, Pamphylia and Lycaonia, (k) and ordained Elders in every Church with Fasting and Prayer. From whence it is very reasonable to infer,

(l) That this Church at Ephesus was certainly beyond the compass of a particular Congregation; or else St. Paul had very little success in all the Pains he took there; which he so (l) particularly mentions in the solemn leave he took of the Elders of the Church whom he sent for to Miletus. And St. Luke speaking of the Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus, saith, (m) That fear fell on them all, and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. So mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed. And St. Paul himself takes notice, (n) that at Ephe-

(g) Bar. An. Dom. 46.
n. 12.

(h) Usser. Anal. A.D.
45, 46. Jac. Cappell.
Gentur. prima Eccles. Chri-
stian. A.D. 43, 45.

(i) A&. 13. 14.

(k) A&. 14. 23.

(l) A&. 10.
20, 25.

(m) A&. 19.
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(n) 1 Cor.
16. 8, 9.

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was a great and effectual Door was open'd unto him. What for one single Congregational Church to be formed, in so great a City, with all the success St. Paul had in his Preaching there; when, in far less time, he planted so many Churches in other Places!

(2.) That the Extent of St. Paul's Care did reach beyond the Bounds of the City: it being very improbable, that those of *Asia* should so long hear St. Paul Preach at *Ephesus*, and yet no Churches be founded, by his means, in any of the neighbour Cities.

But withall, it seems probable to me, that the Elders of those Churches were not as yet removed from *Ephesus*, where St. Paul ordained them, with a design to fix them in their several Stations; For it is observable, that

(1) St. Paul sent to *Ephesus* for the Elders of the Church to come to *Miletus*; whereas, if they had been dispersed, he would have sent to their several Places of abode; and yet when they came to *Miletus* from *Ephesus* (which were not far distant,

(1) Act. 19.
17.
20.

(said by Miletus) he discourses
 Place he meant, which is
 called Pigea, or
 Scila Thora, but some
 imagine, what lies but 10
 Miles from Ephesus to
 the South-west, but rather
 seems to be the
 Phygela of the Ancients.
 The Modern Geographers,
 who make it to be Melisso
 are certainly mistaken,
 not only because of the
 great distance from
 Ephesus, but because its
 Situation doth not agree
 with that of Miletus; for
 it appears by Livy and
 Solinus, that the Mean-
 der ran into the Sea, be-
 tween Miletus and Prie-
 ne; and but 10 Stadia
 from Miletus, saith Pli-
 ny; but Melisso is a
 great distance from it.
 Our latest Travellers think
 it Palatna; but Dr. Spon
 confesses that to be some
 Miles from the Sea; and
 therefore it seems yet to
 be unascertained in its
 Ruins, as is well observed
 by Sir G. Wheeler. Fer-
 rarius places Ephesus
 at 30 Miles distance, be-
 tween Smyrna and Mile-
 tes. Spon saith, it is a
 day and a halfs journey
 from Ephesus to Palati-
 chia. Arrian describes
 Miletus as not far from
 Ephesus, and very near
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And, to these *Elders*, he not only commits the Church of *Ephesus*, but all the *Flock* over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers, i. e. all that had been converted in *Asia*, through his means, during his abode there. (q) *Irenæus* understands St. Paul, as though he summoned them from the Neighbour Cities as well as *Ephesus*; but St. Paul was in so great haste, that he would not so much as go to *Ephesus*, nor send any whither but to that City; and yet those to whom he committed the whole *Flock* then in *Asia*, came from *Ephesus* to *Miletus*; which makes it probable, that there St. Paul had raised a Nursery for the Churches thereabout, as (r) *Clemens* observes the Apostles were wont to doe in Fruitfull Soils; with a prospect of such Churches as were to be formed. *Τὸν μετ' αὐτῶν παραμένοντων.* Now where these were not yet settled, such Persons, remained under the Apostles immediate Care and Instruction, who by their Doctrine and Example, were still preparing them for so great a Work. And *Clemens* takes notice that the Apostles were wont to pitch upon their First-Fruits, or most early Converts, and of these at *Ephesus* we meet with Twelve Persons, upon whom

v. 28.

(q) *Iren. l. 3. c. 14.*

v. 16.

17.

(r) *Clem. Epist. p. 54.*

Act. 19. 6, 7. Saint Paul, at his first coming, laid his hands, and the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with Tongues, and Prophefied. And so were qualified, in an extraordinary manner, to be Teachers of others; and might be in the number of these Elders, whom St. Paul charges to take heed to themselves, and to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers.

When St. Paul sent for these Elders to Miletus; Timothy was with him: For, we find him amongst those who
(S) Act. 20: waited for his return at (S) Troas, upon
1, 2, 3, 4, 5. his coming back from Macedonia through Greece; and therefore his leaving Timothy at Ephesus, was, when he first went
Act. 20. 1. into Macedonia, being forced away by the Uproar that was raised against him there. And in his return through Greece, where he abode three Months, he sends this Epistle to Timothy, then at Ephesus, and taking Care of the Churches thereabout: As he afterwards left Titus in
Tit. 1. 5. Crete, to set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain Elders in every City, as he had appointed him. To this purpose he directs this Canonical Epistle to Timothy; wherein he gives him very particular Directions about the due Exercise

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ercise of that Apostolical Office, which he was entrusted with the management of; And especially about these things,

(1.) The great regard he ought to have to the Doctrine that was taught by those, who were to instruct others; *that thou mightest charge some, that they teach no other Doctrine.* 1 Tim. 1. 3.

(2.) The due Performance of the Publick Offices of Divine Worship; *that Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all Men; for Kings and for all that are in Authority, &c.* And this order Timothy was to see observed in the Churches under his Care. 1 Tim. 2. 1. 3.

(3.) The proper Qualifications of the Bishops and Deacons of the Church, as the proper Officers of it under Timothy; who was to take care of fit Men, to succeed those who were then in being, or to provide more. Ch. 3.

(4.) The manner of proceeding in Church Censures against Elders and Widows, and open Offenders: *Against an Elder receive not an Accusation, but before two or three Witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.* Which plainly shews, that there was a Right of Judging and Censuring Officers. Ch. 5. 1. to the 21st.

Offenders in Timothy, by virtue of his Office.

(5.) The Caution to be used, in admitting Persons to these holy Functions, the Qualifications whereof he had laid down before: And for this he gives a general charge, to do nothing in these matters by *Partiality*; and then mentions the Consideration and Circumspection necessary in the *laying on of Hands*; *Lay hands suddenly on no man.*

Some have thought these words relate to the *Reconciliation* of *Penitents*, and not to the *Ordination* of the *Bishops* and *Deacons* before mentioned; because it immediately follows, *neither be partaker of other men's sins*; but I see no Cause to recede from the Sense generally received, for these Reasons.

(1.) Because St. Paul had not mentioned *laying on of hands* in relation to *Penitents*; but he had done it in this *Epistle*, with respect to *Ordination*; and that, in *Timothy's* own Case; wherein St. Paul as the principal Person did in an Authoritative manner, *lay on his hands*, as himself expresses it, in the second *Epistle*; and the *Presbyters* assisted in *laying on their hands*, to manifest their Concurrence and Approbation: but *the*
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3 Tim. 1. 6.

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laying on of hands is no where in these *Epistles*, applied to the other Sense; nor in any other place of Scripture. Tim. 4.

(2.) If these words do not *relate to Ordination*, St. Paul would have given Timothy no particular direction, about that which was one main part of his Office. As it is expressed concerning Titus, *That he was appointed to ordain Elders in every City*: And no doubt Timothy had the same Commission, which is no where intimated but in these words.

(3.) Supposing, *laying on of hands* then equally used in both Cases, yet the Apostle gives no Rules concerning the Qualifications of Penitents, as he doth concerning Bishops and Deacons; and therefore we have more cause to apply it according to the chief intention and design of this *Epistle*; but he saith nothing before, what Penitents were to be reconciled; and after what time, and under what Conditions they were to have *hands laid on them* in token of Reconciliation. And there is no concurrent Evidence of such a Practice, so early in the Christian Church.

(4.) The following words are capable of a very good meaning, according

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to this Sense. For then being partaker of other men's Sins, doth imply, that as it is a Fault in those who rudely, and inconsiderately, without due preparation of mind, do rush upon so Sacred an Office; so those cannot acquit themselves of a great share in their Guilt, who do not use their best endeavours, by due Examination and Trial of the Persons, to keep them from entering upon it, till they are prepared and qualified for it.

(5.) The great use of the laying on of hands in the New Testament, is for the setting Persons apart for the discharge of a Sacred Office. So, when the Office of Deacons was first instituted, it is said, *They were set before the Apostles, and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.* And which is more considerable, when Barnabas and Paul, by the particular appointment of the Holy Ghost, were to be separated unto the Work whereto God had called them; it is said, *And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.* Here it was not for miraculous Cures, as the Apostles sometimes used it to Sick Persons; nor for conferring miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost,

Acts 13.
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Mark 16:
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Act. 28 8.

Act. 8. 15.

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as at other times they used it; (and probably this was the Gift of God which Timothy had, by laying on of the Apostles' hands;) neither was it a mere Rite of Benediction, as Jacob laid his hands on the sons of Joseph; and our Saviour on the Children when he blessed them; but it was a solemn Rite of Dedication of particular Persons to God, when they are set apart for the Exercise of a Function which immediately related to his Service. I confess, that among the Jews, it was not used in the Consecration of Priests; For, Aaron and his sons were to lay their hands on the Sacrifices that were offered on that occasion, and particularly on the Ram of Consecration; but the Ceremony was performed by putting some part of the Ram, and the Cakes, and the Wafer upon Aaron's hands, and his sons hands. For the Priesthood of the Law being a Work of the hands, the Ceremony was very fitly applied to them; but that of the Gospel being more intellectual and spiritual, the laying on of hands on the Heads of the Persons devoted thereto, was more agreeable to the design of it. And this was an ancient Custom among the Jews in employments of the highest nature. So

Moses

Moses laid his hands on Joshua; and
 Numb. 27. *that it is said, that he was full of the*
 18. 23. *Spirit of Wisdom, for Moses had laid his*
 Deut. 34. 9 *hands on him: and from hence it came*
to be an usual Ceremony among the
Jews, in the Solemn Designation of
Persons for Sacred employments, either
to be Rulers or Teachers in their Syna-
gogues. And from thence it was not
only brought into the Christian Church,
but made use of, to express that Right
and Authority which Persons do receive
together with it, for the Exercise and
Discharge of their Ministerial Function.

So that from these Words, there are
Three things considerable to be spoken
to.

(I.) *The Nature of the Office to which*
they are ordained, by laying on of
hands.

(II.) *The Authority here supposed in*
Timothy, to admit Persons to this
Office, by laying on of hands.

(III.) *The great Care and Circumspe-*
ction necessary for the right perfor-
ming it; Lay hands suddenly on no
man.

(I.) The

(I.) The Nature of the Office; which may relate both to *Bishops* and *Deacons* before mention'd; But the principal parts of that Office, which is here chiefly meant, are by St. Paul said to be these two; *Ruling well*, and *Labouring in the Word and Doctrine*.

v. 17.

(I.) *Ruling well*; Not, in opposition to *Timothy*, who was to *Rule them well*; nor so as to imply, that the entire Power of Government was lodged in a College of *Presbyters* then, as St. Jerome imagines; for what had *Timothy* then to do in the governing them? I cannot find any Argument of Force in the *New Testament*, to prove, that ever the *Christian Churches* were under the sole Government of *Presbyters*. For what St. Jerome alledgeth, doth by no means prove it: I grant he proves, That the Name of *Bishop* and *Presbyter* were at that time common to the same Persons; But what then? Suppose the *Bishop* and *Elder* here in *Timothy's Epistle* were the same: Doth this prove, that these Govern'd the Church without *Timothy*? The true Question is not about the Sense of Words, but about the Authority of these *Bishops* or *Presbyters*, i. e.

Hier. comment. in Epist. ad Tic.

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Whether the whole Care of their Churches were committed to them, without any Superiour Jurisdiction? What if it
 Phil. 1. 1. be yielded to St. Jerome, *That the Bishops and Deacons at Philippi were no other than the Presbyters and Deacons*; as long as the Apostle, either in Person, or by some other appointed by himself, did rule over them? What, if the Bishops summon'd to Miletus, were no other
 Act. 20. 28. *than the Pastours and Teachers*? Did not St. Paul himself, at that very time, call them together, and give a Charge and Direction to them, as one who had Authority over them? So that it doth nowhere appear in Scripture, that the Presbyters were invested in the Supreme Power over the Church.

But yet they were not excluded from all kind of share in the Government, for then they could never be said to Rule well, who had nothing at all to do in Government: And those who are under a Supreme may be called Governours, and are to be obey'd according to the Nature of their Authority; which doth relate to men in another capacity, and for very different ends from what Civil Government doth.

For

For the Church is a Society in its Nature, Design, Duties, Offices, Censures, really distinct from any mere Humane Institution. And no Christian who believes that the Kingdom of the *Messias* was to be an external, visible Kingdom, can be of another Opinion. And although Christ be *the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, and therefore *as Kings* Revel. 17. 14. 19. 16. they are subject to him; yet that Authority which Christian Kings do exercise over their Subjects, doth not overthrow the Rules and Orders which himself hath establish'd in his Church. For no Power derived from him can void or destroy his own Laws and Institutions. Since then the Church doth subsist by virtue of Christ's own appointment, and that Church is to have peculiar Officers to instruct and govern it, it must follow, that even in a *Christian Kingdom*, the Church is a Society distinct from the Commonwealth.

(2.) *Labouring in the Word and Doctrine.* Not to distinguish them from another sort of *Elders*, whom St. Paul never thought of: For he knew of none but such as were set apart by *laying on of hands*, and therefore dedicated to the

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Work of the Ministry; and if *St. Paul's Bishop* and *Elder* were the same, they must have the same *qualifications*; and one of the chief of them is, *that he be apt to teach*; so that they may as well plead for a *Lay-Bishop*, as for a *Lay-Elder*; *Tim. 3. 2.* or else the *Elder* must be *one apt to teach*, if the same with the *Bishop*.

But some may say, "There was then indeed great need of *labouring in the Word and Doctrine*, when the *Christian Doctrine* was not well known, or understood in the World; But what necessity is there of it now, when all People own the Profession of Christianity among us? And this continual Preaching doth but fill the People's heads with too much Knowledge, and makes them more opinionative, and less capable of being governed."

To which I answer,

If *Christ* appointed Preachers only for the Conversion of Infidels, this Argument would have great force: But the Apostle tells us, That *Christ* hath appointed in his Church, not only *Apostles and Evangelists*, but *Pastours and Teachers*;

Ephes. 4.
11, 12.

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Teachers; for the perfecting of the Saints, and for the edifying of the Body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. There-fore as long as the Church is in its im-
perfect State, as long as it may want Unity or Knowledge, or Improvement, this Office of Teachers is to continue. And those *Elders* will still deserve *double* honour, who do not perfunctorily and rarely discharge this Duty, but who *do labour in the Word and Doctrine.* v. 13.

There are indeed many sorts of Preaching, which the Church stands in no need of, because they tend so little to Edification: Such are all fine Harangues in the Pulpit, *i. e.* Words well put together without suitable Matter; All dry, flat, insipid Discourses, about things of no great consequence to Men's Salvation; All affectations of Jingling Sentences, Far-fetched Allusions, Elaborate Trifles; All impertinent Disputes about needless, vain, intricate Controversies; All Enthusiastick unintelligible Talk, which tends to confound Men's Notions of Religion, and to evaporate the true Spirit of it into Fancies and

Eastern-Modes of speaking: Lastly, All Corrupt and Seditious Doctrine, which poisons the Minds of People with dangerous Errours, or Faction Principles.

But setting all these aside, there remains a Grave, Serious, Pious, Affectionate, Convincing way of Preaching; which is profitable, in its degree, for the same ends for which the holy Scripture is usefull, viz. *for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness*, i.e. for the best purposes in the World. And can any think such a Work to be now unnecessary, as long as men have Consciences to be awaken'd, Errours to be confuted, Vices to be reform'd, and stand so much in need of good direction in the way to Heaven?

2 Tim. 3.
16.

Can we be employ'd about a better or more usefull Work than this? While the Souls of those under our Care, are in such perpetual danger, either of being over-spread with Errours, or overcome with Temptations, or over-set with Difficulties, or overwhelmed with Fears? When should the Pilots shew their Skill and Courage, and Diligence, but when the Sea is rough, and the Weather tempestuous, and Banks of Sand appear on

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one side, and Rocks on the other, and so many Wrecks before them; and the common Mariners are bold and unskillfull, unable to govern, and impatient of being govern'd? Is it time then to say, There is no need of Pilots now, but they may lie in their Cabins and sleep, for the Ship will steer it self well enough, and the Mariners cannot fail of their Duty, as long as the Coasts are known, and the Rocks have been discover'd to them?

It is very true, that the way to Heaven is not now hard to find; but it is no easie matter to bring men to look in earnest after it, or to keep them in it. And here lies the main of our Work of Preaching; We are not to teach men new Doctrines, but to Clear, Defend, and Apply the old, to the Consciences of men. It is very easie to shoot over the People's heads, and to spend an hour to little or no purpose; but it requires all our skill to Preach plainly without flatness; and to set the matters of Religion in the best light, and to recommend them to the minds of People, with the greatest force of Persuasion. It is no hard matter to trifle away the time, but it is so to

Luk 24:32

speak Suitably, Warmly and Effectually
 to the Hearts of our Hearers; to make
 them find the same effect of our Prea-
 ching, which the two Disciples did,
 when Christ unknown was discoursing
 with them; *When they said to one ano-*
ther, Did not our hearts burn within us
while he talked with us, and while he open'd
to us the Scriptures? That is then the best
 way of Preaching, which hath Light
 and Heat together; which clears the
 Scriptures to the People's Capacities,
 and warms their Affections to Spiritual
 things. And it is hardly possible to mi-
 stake, as to the best Method of Prea-
 ching, if men do but judge aright con-
 cerning the End and Design of it. For
 there must be Strength and Clearness
 to convince; and a close Application to
 Men's Consciences, to excite and per-
 suade them to the Practice of those
 things which men can hardly be igno-
 rant of, and yet are very backward to
 do. And therefore this must be the
 chief Work and Business of our Prea-
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Which none ought to undervalue or
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and Dignity it is to take Care of Men's Souls ; and none will be careless in it, who have a regard to their own or others Souls. For in doing this, saith ^{1 Tim. 4. 16.} St. Paul to Timothy, speaking of his diligence in his Function, *Thou shalt both save thy self and them that hear thee ;* 'tis though a Man's own Salvation, and that of his Hearers, went together. That is indeed the most desirable thing in the World to be the Instruments of carrying Souls to Heaven ; for ^{Dan. 12. 3.} *they who convert many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever :* but yet, the most carefull Endeavours do not always meet with Success ; and even our Blessed Saviour's Preaching, who spake as never man spake, was ineffectual to many ; (What then may we expect ?) But this is our Duty, and the most likely way of doing good to Souls, as appears by our Saviour's own Practice ; and if we do not meet with success to our desires, let us not give over doing our Duty ; and say, ^{Isa. 49. 9.} *We have laboured in vain, and spent our strength for nought and in vain ; for surely our judgment is with the Lord, and our Work with our God, as the Prophet speaks ; and if we fail of a Recompence in this World, we shall not in another.*

II. And so I come from the *Nature* of the *Office*, to the *Authority* of *Conferring* it; these words implying it to belong to *Timothy*, as being spoken particularly to him, *Lay hands suddenly on no man*. For although he often speaks of the *Bishops* and *Elders* before; yet he gives no charge about *Ordination*, but only to *Timothy*.

“ True, some say, in this particular Case; but this was by virtue of an “ *Extraordinary Commission* given to him, “ as an *Evangelist* by *St. Paul*: But “ what is this to the standing Rule and “ Practice of the Church in succeeding “ Ages? which is not to be govern’d “ by such *Precedents*, unless the Suc- “ cession in the same Office be made ap- “ pear in the following Bishops of the “ several Churches.

To make this Matter as clear as I can I shall recommend these things to consideration.

(I. *Consid.*) That from hence appears evidently, That the *Apostolical Power* of *Governing Churches*, and *Ordaining Elders* in them, was not limited to the Persons

of

of the *Apostles*, but was capable of being communicated to others whom the Apostle entrusted with it. And this is a very material Point, to Prove, that this Power was not so peculiar to the *Apostles*, but it might be transmitted to others, and therefore might be continued in the Church.

But the great Objection against *Timothy's* being a Pattern for *Episcopal Power* is this; That it appears by Scripture, "he was sent up and down to several Places, as *St. Paul* thought fit. For "he took him into his attendance at (a) *A&.* 16.
 "(a) *Lystra*; from whence he accompanied him through (b) *Phrygia, Galatia, Macedonia*, and (c) (there from (c) 12.
 "*Philippi* to *Thessalonica* and *Beræa*.) 17. 1. 10.
 "And when he went to *Athens*, he (d) (d) v. 15.
 "sent for *Timothy* to him, and sent him from thence back to *Thessalonica*; and he returned from (e) *Macedonia* to him (e) 1. *Theff*
 "(f) at *Corinth*. From thence *St. Paul* 3. 1. 2.
 "went into (g) *Syria*, and so to (b) (f) *A&.* 18.
 "*Ephesus* and there again he sent *Timothy* into (i) *Macedonia* with *Erastus*; (g) 18.
 "(k) whither *St. Paul* went afterwards (h) 19.
 "himself. And upon his return to *Miletus*, he speaks to the *Elders*, and (i) *A&.* 19.
 "not to *Timothy*, as their *Bishop*. From (k) 20.
 "hence

“hence, they say, St. Paul took him to
 “*Jerusalem*, and so to *Rome*, as appears
 “by the *Epistles Written from thence*.”

From this Series of the Story they
 conclude *Timothy* to have been conely
 an *Evangelist*, and not a fixt *Bishop*.

To which I Answer, That the fre-
 quent removes of *Timothy*, before this
Epistle to him at *Ephesus*, are not ma-
 terial to this purpose. But it is very
 material to consider, what Power of
 Government St. Paul then committed
 to him. Which is a certain Proof, that
 such a power was not so peculiar to the
Apostles, by vertue of their immediate
 Commission from Christ, but it might
 be delegated to others in their stead.
 Whether for a longer or shorter time,
 whether while the *Apostles* went up
 and down, or near their Decease, makes
 no difference, as to the Point of Dele-
 gation. And if it be granted, that such
 an Apostolical Power of Governing
 Churches might be committed to others
 and was actually so by the *Apostles*;
 then there is no more to be done, but
 to enquire, whether upon their Remove,
 or Departure, they did entrust any Per-
 sons in such a manner, as it is certain
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from Scripture Saint Paul did Timothy, as to the Churches of Asia, when he went into Macedonia.

Some think, that St. Paul's leaving Timothy at Ephesus, was upon his return out of Macedonia, when he was going up to Jerusalem, knowing that they should see his face no more: and that while he staid for him at Troas, he sent this Epistle to him. But St. Paul's words are too plain to be avoided, that he left him at Ephesus, Προεστάντος εἰς Μακεδονίαν, which can never be interpreted returning from Macedonia. And there was as much need of one to look after the Churches of Asia, when St. Paul was then absent in Macedonia, as when he went to Jerusalem: and so (l) Theodoret under-

stands it. But if Timothy were then with St. Paul, as appears by his being at (m) Troas, when he went from thence to Miletus, that was sufficient Reason why he did not address himself to him, but to the Elders which came from Ephesus; whom he put in mind of their Duty by his Speech, as he had done Timothy by an Epistle not long before directed to him.

Whose Office was no more superseded by this Charge given to them, than a

Proconsul's

(l) Theodoret. Praefat. in Epist. Pauli.
(m) Act. 20. 4, 5.

Proconsul was by the *Senates* Instructions to his *Legates*, when himself was present.

If it were evidently proved, that *St. Paul* then carried away *Timothy* with him to *Jerusalem*, and so to *Rome*, there would be greater force in the Objection. But how doth that appear? Not from Scripture. For when *St. Paul* appeared at the Temple, the *Jews* laid hold on him, because they supposed (n) he had brought
 (n) A. R. 21. 29. *Trophimus* the *Ephesian* with him into the Temple, whom they had seen so much with him in the City. How came *Timothy* not to be as much taken notice of, if he were there? For, he being discovered by the *Jews* of *Asia*, there was far greater Reason for them to have raised a Tumult about *Timothy*, than about *Trophimus*.

(o) A. R. 24. 27. After this, we find (o) *St. Paul* kept two years in Prison, and not a word of *Timothy*, whom we may justly suppose exercising his Charge all that time at *Ephesus*. When Saint *Paul* was carried to *Rome*, we find not *Timothy* in his Company; no mention being made of him till he Wrote the *Epistles* to the (p)
 (p) Phil. 1. 1. *Philippians* and (q) *Colossians*, and then
 (q) Coloss. 1. 1. *Timothy* was with him. For *St. Paul* had sent for him from *Ephesus* in his Second

cond (r) *Epistle*; where, in all probability, he remained till that time. During his stay at Rome those *Epistles* were written, as likewise that to *Philamon*, and to the *Hebrews*; in which it is said, (f) That he had been Imprison'd and was then at Liberty; and intended shortly to return into the Eastern Parts. From henceforwards we read nothing of *Timothy* in Scripture. But (r) *St. Jerome* himself makes him Bishop of the *Ephestians*, and so doth (u) *Eusebius*; (x) *Theodoret* calls him, *The Apostle of those in Asia*; and *St. (y) Chrysostome* saith, *The whole People of Asia were committed to his Charge*, i. e. of this *Proconsular Asia*, which lay about *Ephesus*.

(r) 2 Tim. 4. 9.

(f) Heb. 13. 23.

(r) Hier. in Catal.

(u) Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 4.

(x) Theod. in 1 Tim. 3. 1.

(y) Chrys. in 1 Tim. 5. 19.

Hom. 15.

And now let any reasonable Man consider, whether there be not sufficient Proof, that the Apostolical Power of Governing Churches was communicated to others besides the *Apostles* themselves; and consequently there might be a Succession in that Power, in as many as the *Apostles* thought fit.

It is confessed by some (z) That there were Secondary Apostles, such as besides *Timothy* and *Titus*, *Linus*, *Clemens* and *Epaphroditus* are said to have been; but these are called *Itinerant Preachers*, and

(z) Wal. Messal. c. 1. p. 40. 50. 81.

not fixed Bishops: But the same Persons observe from (a) *Theodoret*, not onely that these were called *Bishops* afterwards; but that the Reason why *St. Paul* Wrote *Epistles* to some, and not to others, was, because some he took with him, and others he entrusted with the Government of Churches. *Ἐκκλησιαὶς ἀγκυραρχαὶς*, which can hardly agree to *Itinerant Preachers*.

But it is said, *These Secondary Apostles* were not sent by *Christ*, but by the *Apostles*. And what then? Would the *Apostles* betray their Trust, and commit part of that charge to others, which was entrusted onely to themselves? But if this Office were by the Will of *Christ* appropriated to the Persons of the *Apostles*, they could not commit it to others without breach of Trust. And if it were not so, then this Power might be communicated to as many as the *Apostles* judged convenient; and so (as I said before) we have nothing farther to do, but to enquire, whether at their removal from particular Churches, they did not put this Power into the Hands of others.

(II. *Confid.*) Whether the *Apostles*, upon their withdrawing, did pass this Power

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Power over to others, as *St. Paul* did plainly in the Case of *Timothy* and *Titus*, is a matter of Fact; and to be proved in such a manner as such a thing is capable of. We find plainly, the *Apostles* had this Power in themselves, and did convey it to some others; but whether *Universally*, and with a design to continue this Order, must be proved by the best means we can doe a matter of Fact of so great Antiquity.

(III. *Confid.*) There can be no stronger Proof of such a matter of Fact, than the general sense of the *Christian Church* in the Ages next succeeding the *Apostles*.

Now, as to the finding out the general sense of the *Church*, as to this matter, I shall premise Three things.

(1.) It is not necessary to prove from *Scripture*, that the *Apostles* did observe the same method in all Churches; which we find, as to the Churches of *Ephesus* and *Crete*. For we have no such particular account, as to the other Churches; but we are certain *St. Paul* would doe no irregular thing, nor communicate

cate an Office to others, which was to expire with themselves.

(2.) It is not at all necessary, to prove, that all the *Bishops* mention'd in *Scripture* had this *Apostolical Power*; for the contrary appears in the *Bishops* under *Timothy* and *Titus*; and therefore the *Succession* is not to be drawn from the *Bishops* mentioned in the *Epistles* to them, but from themselves; the want of considering this one Point, hath caused more perplexity in the Controversie about *Episcopacy*, than any one thing besides.

(3.) It is not necessary that the *Succession* in this *Apostolical Power* be made equally clear in all *Churches*; since the *Records* of the Church may be more doubtfull and defective in some Churches which are not in others. But yet there are these ways to make out the general Sense of the Christian Church as to this point.

(1.) That the Evidence of the *Succession* is clear in the most conspicuous Churches, by undoubted Testimonies.

(2.) That those who seem'd most doubtfull about the first *Succession*, do yield the general Consent of the Church in the Practice of it.

(1.) That

(1.) As to the undoubted Testimonies of this Succession in the most conspicuous Churches; I shall first appeal to *Irenæus* and *Tertullian*, as least liable to Exception. The former not onely mentions a Succession of Persons to the Apostles; but he saith,

(*) *The Apostles committed the Care of the Churches to them; and left them to succeed in their Places:* Which implies that as the Apostles themselves had the Care of the Church, so they com-

mitted it to the Bishops, whom they chose to succeed them. *Tertullian* not onely mentions those in general who succeeded the Apostles, but particularly instanceth in *Polycarp*, placed by *St. John*

at *Smyrna*; and *Clemens*, by *St. Peter* at *Rome*; and then adds, (†) *That the other Churches had Bishops placed in them like to these.* So that what Authority *Polycarp* had

at *Smyrna*, or *Clemens* at *Rome*, that *Tertullian* affirms the Bishops had in other Churches. Now *Irenæus* saith, That *Clemens* had *Episcopatum administrandæ Ecclesiæ*, i. e. the Episcopal Power of governing the Church which the A-

(*) Qui ab Apostolis ipsis instituti sunt Episcopi in Ecclesiis — quibus etiam ipsas Ecclesias committebant — quos & Successores relinquebant, suum ipsorum locum Magisterii tradentes. *Iren.* l. 3. c. 3.

(†) Proinde utique & ceteræ exhibent quos ab Apostolis in Episcopatum constitutos Apostolici seminis traduces habeant. *Tertull. de præscript.* c. 32.

postles delivered to them. And St. Chry-
 Chryf. To some faith of Ignatius, That he Recei-
 5. P. 499 ved the Government of that Church from
 the Apostles own hands. And the Com-
 mentatour on the Apocahypse, under
 St. Ambrose's Name, calls the Angels of
 the Seven Churches, The Governours of
 those Churches. From all which, we
 may justly infer, That this Succession
 was not in mere Presidency of Order,
 but that the Bishops succeeded the Apo-
 stles in the Government over those Chur-
 ches. But as Theodoret well observes,
 Theod. ad The Name of Apostles was not conti-
 1 Tim. c. 3. nued, out of Reverence to the Apostles;
 but the Name of Bishops was then appro-
 priated to the Successours of the Apostles;
 Which alteration of the Name, hath
 proved another great Occasion of the
 Confusion in this Controversie. But
 that the Bishops did succeed the Apostles
 we have the general Con-
 sent of the Ancient (*) Fa-
 thers, who were the most
 competent Witnesses in this
 Case; which is an Argu-
 ment, they believed the A-
 postolical Power, with respect to the Go-
 vernment of Churches, did not expire
 with the Apostles, but was to continue,
 as long as Christ had promised to be
 with

(*) Cyprian. Epist. 3.

66. ad. Ox. Hier. in Psal.

44. ad Evagr. Ep. 85. ad

Marcellam Aug. in Psal.

44. Ambros. in Eph. 4.

11. & in 1 Cor. 12. 28.

with them, i. e. to the end of the World. Mat. 28. 20.

(2.) That those who seem'd most doubtfull about the Original of Episcopacy, doe yield the general consent of the Church in the Practice of it. Some few of the *Ancients* must be allowed to have had *singular Fancies and Opinions* of their own, about this Matter. And the not yielding this, hath been another great Advantage to the Enemies of Episcopacy.

But, as to those few among the Fathers, who have advanced singular Opinions about the *first Government of Churches*, I desire these things may be observ'd:

(1.) That it is no wonder there should be different Opinions about the Beginnings of things, which are generally very obscure; and therefore thinking Men are apt to frame different *Hypotheses* about them. As about the Original of Civil Government; some founding it in Dominion and Property; others on Consent of the People; others in a Natural Right of Sovereignty, which one preserves, and the rest part with; others in Primogeniture; and lastly, others most reasonably in Divine Providence and Institution. Whilst these things lie onely in *Speculation*, a difference of Opinions is hard

to be prevented, and of no such ill consequence to the World: but if Men, from those *Speculations*, draw such Inferences as tend to disturb the Peace of the World, and to withdraw Men from Obedience to Government; then such Opinions are to be looked on as Dangerous and Seditious, and care must be taken to prevent their spreading. So here about the Rise of *Episcopal Government*, if the Question were only a matter of Curiosity, *Whether the Apostles did first try the Experiment of Presbyters governing in common, and upon the inconveniences of that Government set up Bishops*, as St. Jerome seems to think; or, *Whether there were at first a Succession in Course*, as another of the Ancients imagin'd, till the inconveniences of that made a Choice necessary: If it went no farther than bare *Speculations*, though these Opinions may be both false, yet they are not dangerous: But when any from hence infer, the *Episcopal Government* to be an Usurpation, and that Men are bound to restore the Right of Presbyters in opposition to them, notwithstanding the Universal Consent of the Church, from the Apostles times; then such Opinions change their Nature, and become

Sub Nomi-
ne Ambros.
in c. c. ad
Ephes.

come mischievous in their Consequen-

(2.) It is a great Argument against these singular Opinions, that they contradict each other; and therefore the General Sense of the Church is to be prefer'd before them. For St. Jerome affirms, *That from St. Mark's time, in the Church of Alexandria, the Presbyters always chose one of their Body, whom they made their Bishop:* So that no such thing could ever be practised there, as a Succession in Course, which the other affirms. And as it is the great Advantage of Monarchy, that it had the General Consent of Mankind in the Eldest times; and that those who would set up Popular Government, differ so much in the First Principles and Fundamentals of it; So it is as to the Government of the Church by Bishops, that even these who differ about the First Form, yet agree in the early Change, and the Universal Consent in it.

(3.) If St. Jerome be understood of the setting up Episcopacy in the Apostolical Churches, after the Apostles times, and a trial then made of Governing by Presbyters, he cannot be excused from contradicting himself as well as the rest

Hieron in
Epist. ad E.
vagr. 85.

of the Fathers. For what Experiment was there of that kind in the Church of Alexandria, if from St. Mark's time, the Presbyters set up one above themselves, as an Army making choice of a General; which are his own Expressions. Will any Man say, An Army is Governed by a Council of Inferiour Officers, when they have a General over them, though of their own choosing? So in the Church of Jerusalem, he saith, St. James was the first Bishop; How was that Church then Governed by a College of Presbyters? At Ephesus, he confesses Timorhy was Bishop there; and Titus in Crete. At Rome he makes Linus and Clemens to succeed in the Bishoprick there. At Antioch, he saith, Ignatius was Bishop, and he owns his Epistles, and surely there is nothing like the sole Government by Presbyters in them. At Smyrna, he saith Polycarp was appointed Bishop, and had care of the Churches of Asia. Where then, according to St. Jerome, is this Government by Presbyters to be found after the Apostles times?

(4.) No Man lays down greater Reasons for the Change of this Government, than St. Jerome doth. For he

Hieron. ad
Gal. 2. &
in Script.
Ecclesj.

In Catalog.

he saith, *That Episcopacy was found necessary to prevent Schisms and Disorders, and tearing the Church in pieces.* What could be said more to the Advantage of any Government than that it was brought in upon the best Reason for Government in the World, viz. the preserving of Peace and Order in the Church?

We need not carry the matter so far, as to make St. Jerome charge the Apostles with Indiscretion before, in not preventing the first Occasion of Schisms. For he might think, the Presbyters would have thought themselves hardly dealt with, to be excluded from Government till the Experiment were tried, and the Confusions following convinced themselves of the Necessity of a Superiour, and so made them more willing to submit. St. Jerome seems to have had the same kind of Notion of Church-Government, which others have of the beginnings of Civil-Government, viz. That at first there was a State of War among Mankind, and the inconveniencies of that made Men willing to part with their own Rights for

Quod autem postea unus electus qui ceteris preponeretur in Schismatis remedium factum sit, ut unusquisque ad se trahens Christi Ecclesiam rumpere. Ad Evagr.

Ut unus de Presbyteris electus superponeretur ceteris, ad quem omnis Ecclesia cura pertineret, & Schismatum semina tollerentur. In Comment. ad Tit.

the sake of Peace; so these *Presbyters*, finding so much Disorder and Confusion, by being left to themselves, were far better contented to yield to such Government as would best keep the Church in Peace.

(5.) *St. Jerome* yields, that this Alteration of Government did *Universally obtain*. For nothing less than that can be meant by his *In tota orbis decretum est*: He doth not speak clearly, whether he means a Decree of the *Apostles* to bind the Church, or a General Consent; but whichsoever be meant, he supposes no difference, or opposition about it. If he had said it was done by the *Apostles* in plain terms, he had taken away the force of his own Argument, which goes upon the *Apostles Times*; but yet it is hard to conceive how such an alteration should happen without the *Apostles Act*. For, if they had left the *Presbyters* in full Power of Government, it is not to be imagin'd, they would so universally part with it, without being obliged thereto, by those who had Authority over them; but this *St. Jerome* leaves to be gather'd by the Event.

(6.) *St. Jerome* never supposes this Alteration to have been made against any Institution.

Institution of Christ. All that he saith, is, *That there was a time when the Presbyters were left to themselves, and so did Govern the Church by common Consent. And at that time the Apostles writing to them suppose a Bishop and Presbyter the same: but he never saith that Christ had appointed, that none should be set over them. For then there could be no Alteration without Violation of a Law of Christ, which he could never suppose would so universally obtain without opposition. And he never dreamt the setting up of this Government to be any part of the Mystery of Iniquity then working; unless he could imagine the preserving the Peace of the Church to be it. On the contrary, St. Jerome makes this Government in the very same Places to bear an Analogy to Aaron and his Sons, and the Levites in the Temple, to Moses and the LXX Elders, under the Law: and in other Places out of the heat of Dispute, when the Roman Deacons were not in his head, he makes the Bishops the Successors of the Apostles. But if*

Fuerunt, O Ecclesia, Apostoli Patres tui — Nunc quia illi recesserunt a mundo, habes pro his Episcopos filios, quia te creati sunt; sunt enim & hi Patres tui, quia ab ipsis regeris. Comment. ad Psal. 44. Ceterum omnes Apostolorum Successores sunt. Ad Evag. Apud nos Apostolorum locum Episcopi tenent. Ad Marcellam.

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they had come in by Usurpation, they would have called them the Successors of Simon Magus, of Diotrephes, of Caiaphas, and according to his warm manner of Expression, of Lucifer himself.

(7.) St. Jerome concludes this Alteration to have been made on such good grounds, that all Persons are bound to submit to it, and to be subject to the Bishops as their Spiritual Governours.

Nay, he makes the Peace and Welfare of the Church to depend upon it. And nothing more can be said in that respect for any Government, than even St. Jerome speaks for Episcopacy.

Esto subditus Pontifici tuo & quasi Anima Parentem suscipe. Ad Nepotian.

Nec hoc dico quod istiusmodi Gradibus in Ecclesia non debeat esse subiecti. Quicumque enim maledixerit Patri aut Matri morte morietur. Et Apostolus docet Praepositis in Ecclesia obedendum. In Mich. c. 7.

Ecclesia Salva in summi Sacerdotis Dignitate pendet, cui si non Exors quadam & ab omnibus eminent detur potestas, tot in Ecclesia efficiuntur Schismatici, quot Sacerdotes. Advers. Luciferianos.

(IV. *Consid.*) The Universal Consent of the Church being proved, there is as great Reason to believe, the Apostolical Succession to be of Divine Institution, as the Canon of Scripture, or the Observation of the Lord's Day. We do not doubt but it is unlawfull to add to, or to diminish from the Canon of Scripture, and yet

yet there is no plain Text for it, with respect to all the Books contained in it, and some of the Books were a long time disputed in some Churches; but the Churches coming at last to a full Agreement in this matter, upon due search and enquiry, hath been thought sufficient to bind all after-Ages to make no Alterations in it. And as to the *Divine Institution* of the *Lord's Day*, we do not go about to lessen it, but only to shew, that some Examples in Scripture being joined with the *Universal Practice* of the Church in its purest Ages, hath been allowed to be sufficient ground not only for following Ages to observe it, but to look on it as at least an *Apostolical Institution*. Now it cannot but seem unequal, not to allow the same force, where there is the same Evidence. And therefore our Church hath wisely and truly determined, *That since the Apostle's times there have been three Orders, of Bishops, Priests and Deacons*; and in a Regular, well constituted Church, are to continue to the World's End.

III. The last thing to be spoken to, is the *Care and Circumspection* necessary in admitting Persons to the Exercise of this holy

holy Function here mention'd, *Lay hands suddenly on no man*. And that will appear very reasonable on these accounts, because the *Welfare of the Church*, the *Honour of Religion*, and the *Salvation of Men's Souls* depend so much upon those who are admitted to holy Orders; and therefore it is not only *Negligence* and *Stupidity*, but *Unfaithfulness* to the Trust reposed in them, if through their Fault they suffer unfit Men to take upon them to be the Ministers of holy things.

(1.) The *Welfare of the Church* is so much concerned in it. It is true, some have higher Places, greater Authority, more powerfull Influence on the State of the Church than others have; but yet every Wheel must be in its due Order and Motion, or the whole may be easily disturbed. A loose, irregular Clergy have so great Influence on the Minds of some People, with respect to the whole Church, that they will never think well of that Church where such Persons are employ'd. For they will not distinguish the Good and Bad, where it is more suitable to their Interest, and Prejudices not to do it.

And we find, by too sad Experience, if those who are disaffected to our Church have met with unfit Persons in their Places,

Places, though very obscure and remote, what perpetual Clamour they make with it all their Lives after; and what Insinuations are given, that the rest were alike; and this is still pleaded, how unjustly soever, as the most popular Argument for Separation. So that a Scandalous Clergy-man doth unspeakable Mischief, not only to his own and others Souls, but to the whole Church he owns himself to be of. And very many good Examples do not signifie so much to the Benefit of a Church, as a few bad ones do to the Mischief of it.

(2.) The *Honour* of *Religion* lies at Stake too; which suffers very much, when those who pretend to Teach others the way to Heaven, are seen going themselves, and drawing others into the broad Way to Destruction. Our Preaching to the People their Duties, doth but make them more narrowly watch and observe our Lives, to see whether we live agreeably to the Directions we give them. And if we slight in our Practice what we Preach in the Pulpit, if we act our selves just contrary to what we require from them, it will be hardly possible to convince them we are in earnest, and believe any thing of Religion our selves.

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And how can we imagin they should regard what we say in the Pulpit, if they plainly see we regard it not our selves when we are out of it? It was *Aristotle's* observation long ago; That it is not what Men speak, which moves the People so much, as the Opinion they have of the Person that speaks: and therefore the Oratours of old put into the Definition of one fit to persuade the People, that he must have the Reputation of a good Man; otherwise all he speaks will be thought only Art or Design.

Act. 19. 34.

I know no way to have the Reputation of a good Man, like being so: and we are infinitely more concerned to be so, than those, whose great Business was to put false Colours upon things. We speak the Words of Truth and Soberness; let us not then make the People question them, by not finding the due effects of them in our own Conversations. They are very apt to suspect we look on Preaching as our Trade, and mind it no more than the Silver-smiths did the Shrines they made for *Diana*, which they set off to the best advantage, not for the Reverence they had for *Diana*, but for the Gain she brought to the Crafts men. We have no such effectual Way to convince

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our Auditours, that we mean what we say, as when they find us to be great Examples our selves of the Duties we press upon them, *viz.* of Devotion, Humility, Charity, Sobriety, Mortification, Contentedness, Peaceableness, and Universal Holiness: and when the People see our *Light shining before them, by the good Works we do*, we shall thereby excite them to glorifie God, to think better of Religion, and to follow our Example.

(3.) The *Salvation of Men's Souls* depends very much upon the *Care and Conduct* of those who are to be their Guides to Heaven. For, if they lead them astray, whom they think they are bound to follow, their destruction will be unavoidable. *When the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the Ditch*; but yet the *blind leader* falls first, and falls heaviest and deepest, and the other falls upon him, and sinks him lower. It is a sad thing to have the Guilt of other Men's sins, as well as our own to answer for; when by our wilfull Neglect of our known Duty, or by our Examples, or by our Erroneous Doctrine, we prove the occasion of damning those Souls, which were committed to our Charge to conduct them to Heaven.

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The Care of *Souls* would be a dreadful thing indeed, if we were to answer for all the Miscarriages of the People committed to our Charge: But if they are such as happen through the voluntary and plain Omission of the Duty laid upon us; or our being accessory to their Commission of them, they may be justly charged on our Account.

With what *Care* and *Caution* then ought all Persons to enter upon so weighty, so holy, so tremendous a Charge? What Preparation of Mind is necessary to consider it! What *Fasting* and *Prayer* to obtain God's Assistance in it! What Wisdom, and Piety, and Resolution to discharge it!

But let us not be dishearten'd; we serve a Gracious Master, and in the best Employment; and although we may meet with many Difficulties, within and without, and on all sides, yet *let us be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, for as much as we know, that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.*

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